

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

MOVING THE BASIC COURSE FORWARD:  
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF A COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT'S TRANSITION TO A HYBRID PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS MODEL

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership

by

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May 2012

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SIGNATURE PAGE

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## DEDICATION

To my students past, present, and future;  
know that in the final accounting  
it will be I who owe you for lessons learned.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*“Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.” ~Abigail Adams*

Eight hundred and forty-one days. Not a long time in the grand scheme of things, but time enough to have forged links that will last a lifetime, and with some, friendships whose depths are beyond measure. It is simply not possible to individually acknowledge all who contributed their time, energy, and support for this project. To those who did, thank you.

Einstein once wrote, “I know quite certainly that I myself have no special talent; curiosity, obsession and dogged endurance, combined with self-criticism have brought me to my ideas.” While I do not in any way imagine myself to be ranked on par with Dr. Einstein, I do feel a certain kinship in his words. I had the great good fortune to be invited by a longtime mentor into the pilot project that became the focus of this study—and indeed nearly an obsession for the better part of two years. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to be a part of that process of change; to have helped to provide another avenue for better serving our students, and perhaps a new venue for future courses.

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three women brought a unique perspective and skill set to the process, and their collegial support and direction only made the work better.

Last, and certainly not least, we come to family. Eight hundred and forty-one days is, as noted above, not a long time, but it is *a* time. And in that time, my family were a constant loving—and when needed, motivating—presence throughout this process, especially Sheryl. Meals appeared, the dog was walked, laundry done, hugs given . . . all with love, good humor, and no little encouragement. Thank you.

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We have endured the losses of homes, jobs, marriages, parents, and siblings . . . together. We have celebrated anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, and weddings . . . together. We have grown . . . together.

And we have succeeded . . . together.

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## ABSTRACT

### MOVING THE BASIC COURSE FORWARD:

#### A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF A COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEPARTMENT'S TRANSITION TO A HYBRID PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS MODEL

by

Polly M. Robinson

Doctor of Education Degree

in Educational Leadership

The Basic Course in Public Speaking is required of all undergraduate students at most universities and community colleges. The course is often an in-class, twice-weekly class, offering students and instructors the opportunity to build a safe and interactive environment in which students can learn to—and, for many, overcome their fear of—public speaking. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of full- and part-time faculty and teaching assistants who transitioned from the classroom-only model to a split delivery of course content in a hybrid format: 50% delivered online and 50% in class. The change in delivery was a decision given to the department, and this study examined the impact of that ordered change as well as the experiences of faculty involved in the evolution of the new model. Data were collected through open-ended online surveys and an interview with an administrator. Instructor response themes included: Classroom community (a new space for connection, and a reduced connection); student motivation; pedagogy and praxis (redefining the classroom, and integrating the learning spaces); collaboration and support (collegial support, adequate training, and technical support); and uneasiness (moving public speaking online, and technical course management). Faculty response themes included: Community (within the classroom, and within the department); preconceptions of course quality (expected negative impact on student outcomes), no voice in the decision (participation in the implementation); and the importance of research (benefit of a pilot program, and consistent content). This research adds to the existing body of knowledge encompassing teaching online, and offers a perspective on how a department can successfully integrate the online component into an essentially performance-based curriculum.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Just as language has evolved over time, so too has the manner in which we communicate. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—from whom come the present-day canons of rhetoric—renowned thinkers and philosophers of their time, were firmly based in orality, even after the invention of the Greek alphabet (Havelock, 1980). While the new “technology” of writing implements was becoming more available, Socrates resisted the use of the tool, and the inherent literacy that came with it. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates’ student Plato, though sometimes seen as a spokesman for knowledge that grew out of writing, criticized the practice of writing on the grounds that if writing is a symbol for speech, and speech a symbol for thought, writing is twice removed from thought; therefore twice removed from the knowledge of the mind who spoke the words (Lentz, 1982; Ong, 1982). In other words, Plato felt that when the words or symbols are too far removed from the original speaker, only the appearance of knowledge remains.

The transition from an oral society to a literate, i.e. written, society, signaled what Ong (1980) called a transition from a primary to a secondary orality. Ong noted that Plato’s resistance to this change came from the perception that while orality was pristine and untouched by writing or print, written words lost the ambiguity of thought and interpretation of the listener, thereby losing the “rhapsodic quality” of the words themselves. Thus it was nearly 300 years following the invention of the Greek alphabet that Greek society passed from a purely oral reality to a literate society based in the written word (Havelock, 1963), indeed, a lengthy process of change. Ong (1982) later wrote that the “shift from orality through writing and print to electronic processing of the word has profoundly affected and, indeed, basically determined the evolution of the

verbal art” (p. 158). Resistance to that shift, wrote Havelock (1980), came in two forms. First the lack of material to make the effort of learning to read worthwhile, and second, there existed no “technology for teaching it to preadolescent children . . . the institutional arrangements necessary for this purpose did not exist” (p. 94).

The challenges facing professors of Public Speaking today are no less great than those faced by Socrates; new technologies, new means of transferring information challenging the status quo and very nature of the discipline, combined with an increased demand for greater services to a greater number of students. With the increasing demand to provide more flexible educational opportunities without increasing costs, educators and administrators are searching for new and better ways to serve an increasingly technologically sophisticated cadre of students. While some areas of scholarly work such as the “pure” or “hard” sciences more easily lend themselves to the adoption of technology and transition to a digital, or virtual, arena, other areas face greater pedagogical challenges. Within the social science sphere, public speaking is, by its very nature, a discipline and research area that relies upon immediate feedback and the lived experience of performance before a real audience.

As early as 1983, Clark found that the quality of education depends on the pedagogy and design of the instruction, rather than how it is delivered, and suggested that “researchers refrain from producing additional studies exploring the relationship between media and learning unless a novel theory is suggested” (p. 457). Later researchers concur with Clark’s findings, including Russell (2001) who, after reviewing hundreds of comparative studies following the technological boom of the 1990s, found that there was no significant difference in student outcomes when comparing online delivery to face-to-

face instruction. The US Department of Education (2010), too, concluded that Clark's (1983, 1994) cautions against over interpreting the lack of media impact is an important factor to consider when examining the impact of mediated course delivery.

On a broader scale, the question of whether online delivery of course content is effective is moot, by many researchers' standards. Russell's (2001) findings of no significant difference in student outcomes after evaluating 355 studies was supported by the US Department of Education's (USDOE) meta-analysis of over one-thousand empirical studies of online learning (2010). The USDOE's report states the meta-analysis found that, on average, students who took "blended" courses—combining elements of face-to-face and online instruction—"performed better than those receiving face-to-face instruction" (p. 53). Therefore, the purpose of this study is not to argue the efficacy of online or hybrid teaching models, but rather to examine the top-down ordered change in course delivery of a core university course and what impact, if any, that change had on faculty and students.

### **Problem Statement**

The leadership of a large, urban, four-year college was tasked to maximize classroom and campus efficiency and to develop a greater opportunity for serving students through online and hybrid education. The communication studies department at this university offers a Public Speaking course that is required of all undergraduate students and it was in this program area that the department felt they had the most potential to meet the campus leadership's challenge.

Responding to the need to accommodate higher demand for classes without increasing physical classroom space, the University directed that "FTES generated by

hybrid and on-line courses must increase by five percent in 2008/09 and 10% per year in 2009/10 and 2010/11” (Faculty Senate, 2008). That directive led the communication studies department chair to direct that the Basic Course, which serves an average of 1400 students per academic year move from the traditional, in-class model to a hybrid mode of delivery.

Public speaking is, by definition, a course in which students and professors interact and engage in discourse. Dance (2002) wrote that the “renewal of the speech and thought paradigm calls for real change and a transformation in the way we conduct the basic course in speech” (p. 357). Dance further encourages educators to question how shifts in paradigm affect effectiveness of the course, including questioning the linkages between speech and thought. These questions and more led the department to adopt a change model that would incorporate the best of both arenas—a hybrid model, with 50% of the course content delivered online and 50% in the classroom.

The development of the platform was critical to the success of the pilot and the full transition of all sections, especially when many other departments on campus were also moving some courses online. The department considered the impact on the campus’ existing infrastructure when designing the course system; it was critical that the online portion of the class be available to students at all times with minimal impact to the students; students and faculty would lose patience if technological issues or failures prevented access to the virtual classroom. The experiences of the faculty and course designers during the development and implementation of this new mode of delivery will shape this research.

While faculty would lose, to some degree, the immediacy of feedback and

response to discussion questions, Baglione and Nastanski (2007) note that online discussions can allow students to participate while avoiding the fear that often comes with speaking up in front of their peers.

Designing online or mixed-delivery courses requires a great deal of strategic planning and thought (Care & Scanlan, 2001). Infrastructure and technological issues have to be considered, as well as the pedagogical implications of changing a mode of delivery for a course of study that is rooted in face-to-face discourse. What elements of the course will be moved to the online space, and in doing so, what areas does that open up for instructors with regard to student learning style and understanding?

### **Purpose and Significance of Study**

As the results of the USDOE (2010) study show, hybrid teaching has become the “pedagogical middle ground” with regard to the use of technology in education. Some evidence suggests that professors of Public Speaking are against online education in their field of study (Carr, 2000). Public speaking is, after all, a medium by which people communicate and receive immediate feedback for their efforts. With that in mind, faculty may view efforts to transition to a hybrid model as “phoning it in” and as not efficiently or effectively serving students.

The purpose of this study was to examine the process by which one university transitioned its entire department’s Basic Course to a hybrid model. This study was a survey of faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching Public Speaking in a hybrid environment, and their experiences with that transition. The study also addressed steps taken by faculty and department administration to facilitate the move to the hybrid model, and what, if any, pedagogical changes such a move entailed. Faculty narrative responses

include some discussion of student learning outcome achievement as measured by the department in which the faculty teach.

Current literature offers an understanding of the history and importance of public speaking as a separate discipline, of the evolution of distance education and mediated course delivery, of the importance of deliberate and cooperative planning in organization change in higher education. This study seeks to bridge a gap in existing literature; few studies focus on examining an institutionally directed program or curriculum change to a new media format through an organizational change lens.

The focus and purpose of phenomenological research is to gain input from people about their experiences with a single event or phenomenon (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Smith, 2008). These studies examined what the communication studies department at a large, urban four-year college did to develop, plan for, and implement the change in the course delivery of the Public Speaking class. The study looked at what worked and what did not, based upon faculty perception, with an understanding that the trend in academics is that more courses will move online or adopt a hybrid model. The results of this study provide guidance for future programs wishing and/or needing to make that same transition. This study is significant in that it is leading the way in an area where there is likely to be greater demand for this mode of course delivery.

This dissertation is a phenomenological study of the faculty perception of the effect of transitioning the Introduction of Public Speaking classes from a traditional in-class only model to a hybrid model. The transition was first a pilot program during the 2007-08 academic school year that encompassed four sections. The pilot then expanded to six sections. In fall of 2009, all 28 sections of Introduction to Public Speaking offered

by the university were transitioned to the hybrid model. This change impacted an average of 1334 students per academic year, 12 adjunct faculty, and 17 teaching associates.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this dissertation focused on the pedagogical implications of a hybrid Public Speaking program and the perceptions of the faculty teaching in that environment. Principally, this study examines:

- RQ1. How do instructors experience an institutionally required transition from a traditional to hybrid format for teaching the Basic Course in Public Speaking?
- RQ2. What factors facilitate a smooth transition to teaching the Basic Course in Public Speaking in a hybrid format?
- RQ3. What barriers are commonly experienced in transitioning from a traditional pedagogical model to a new media mode of delivery?
- RQ4. What departmental dynamics facilitate and/or hinder a successful transition?

### **Operational Definitions**

The following definitions are used throughout this study. These definitions are derived from a variety of sources, including existing literature and terms commonly used in the distance learning community.

**Basic Course:** Refers to the course in which the fundamentals of Public Speaking are taught. Does not refer to remedial or basic skills education.

**Distance learning:** Educational skills and knowledge gained by mail-, television-, radio-, or web-based delivery. (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005).

**e-learning:** any form of education that takes place through the use of information

and communication technologies (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005).

Hybrid or Hybrid model: For the purpose of this study, hybrid is defined as 50% face-to-face, in-class time and 50% of the coursework presented and completed online.

Integration: Curriculum integration with the use of technology involves the infusion of technology as a tool to enhance the learning in a content area or multidisciplinary setting (Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008).

Virtual classrooms: No actual room, campus or place to go for class; can be anywhere in the world with access to the Internet from a computer, laptop, or cellular device (Weston, 2005).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study examined the process by which one department at a large, urban, four-year institution made a fundamental change to the course delivery of a required course for all undergraduates. Through the lens of organizational change, this study seeks to learn how that change was managed from initial idea to full implementation, and what were the organizational change processes that took place. Using Kezar's (2001, 2005c) guidelines for effecting successful change initiatives in higher education, this study examined what did and did not work in the change process.

Additionally, because Public Speaking is a fundamental course in the communication studies curriculum, this study examined what communications processes were used to facilitate this transition. Senge (2006) noted that in any organization, the active force are its people. If the people are not motivated to change, "there will be no growth, no gain in productivity, and no technological advancement" (p. 130). Therefore

this study also examined the communication processes used to achieve critical faculty buy-in on the redesign of the course delivery model.

### **Overview of Methodology**

This study is a qualitative, phenomenological study of the reactions of faculty to a single, department-wide pedagogical event; the redesign of the basic Public Speaking course to fit a new media mode of delivery. Rossman and Rallis (2003) state that phenomenology is “questioning the structure and essence of lived experience” (p. 7). Schwandt (2007), too, defines phenomenology as a “careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life [...] a description of ‘things’ [ . . . ] as one experiences them” (p. 225). Schwandt further defines modern phenomenological research as a means to “identify and describe the subjective experiences of respondents” (p. 226).

Schwandt (2007) noted that a phenomenological researcher is concerned with learning what her research subjects have experienced and what meanings do those subjects make of their experiences. Lastly, Schwandt asks, “how does the person understand his or her experience?” (p. 47). This is an ideal time to conduct this study, while the “institutional memory” of the subjects is still fresh; faculty who have taught both models are still teaching at the university.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) identify several basic assumptions of phenomenological research. They are: a) human behavior occurs and is understandable only in the context of relationship; b) the answer [to research questions] comes from peoples’ lived experiences; and c) people’s perceptions are valid evidence. With those assumptions in mind, this study includes an explanation of the context of the relationships of those within the study, including my own relationship to those observed. Using one

survey for full-time department faculty stakeholders who do not teach the impacted course but are members of the department and one survey for part-time teaching associates responsible for course delivery, this study focused specifically on the overall experience of the transition of Public Speaking to the hybrid format, and the meaning both groups make from those different experiences.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

A limitation of this study is the researcher's involvement within the department. The author of this study has taught Public Speaking within the department, both in the traditional and hybrid mode of delivery, at times concurrently. The author also assisted in the development of the department's current hybrid model. Additionally, the author has witnessed and experienced the pedagogical issues faced by faculty and as both faculty and developer, is aware that there are differing experiences and opinions within the department on the pedagogical success of this event. The author's own role within the department requires that an adaptation from what Gold (1958) identifies as the traditional "complete observer" method. The author has been both student and faculty in the department that was the focus of this study and as such has a unique position from which to identify and interview study participants. Additionally, the software company that hosted the online space later employed this author; therefore, there is a likely bias in favor of the model used in this transition.

Another limitation of this study was the relatively small  $n$  from which to draw conclusions and identify themes. Of the 22 potential respondents for the instructor survey, only ten chose to participate. A similar response ratio occurred with the faculty survey; six of nine department faculty provided responses to the online survey. A last,

and perhaps most significant, limitation of this study as that a majority of the instructors who teach Public Speaking are graduate teaching associates. These students, while being solely responsible for classroom grading and management, worked within a shell designed by the Basic Course Director and the technology advisor for the hybrid program, thus creating the illusion of teaching from a pre-written script. Additionally, because the teaching associates (TAs) have a median age of 22, there is some assumption of a higher comfort-level with the new technology.

A delimitation of this study is that the study is of one department at one university, therefore providing a limited scope of respondents, and that specific consideration had to be taken to incorporate the unique needs of Public Speaking classes.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This study is divided into the following chapters: Chapter Two consists of a literature review covering studies conducted regarding the efficacy of hybrid education models, discussions, and papers concerning change theory, and articles and texts further discussing the growing trend of hybrid teaching models; Chapter Three is an extended discussion of the theoretical framework and methodology used for this study; Chapter Four contains an analysis of the data found; and Chapter Five includes a summary of my findings, conclusions drawn from my findings, and implications for further research and study.

## CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature in this dissertation is divided into three sections: a) the efficacy and history of distance education, b) the history and evolution of the Basic Course in Communication, and c) an overview of literature that examines the different schools of thought of organizational change in higher education.

### **Efficacy and History of Distance Education**

There is a rich history of studies and reports from which to draw regarding the efficacy of online education. The question of efficacy, however, cannot be addressed without at least a rudimentary understanding of the history and evolution of distance or online education. The literature is divided into the following sections: early distance education; the method/medium schism; (re)defining distance education; growing demand; resistance and pedagogy; the question of mediated instruction and impact on outcomes; redux; from “distance education” to “e-learning;” impact of faculty and student satisfaction on outcomes; impact of faculty and student satisfaction on online course adoption; a new “normal.”

### **Early Distance Education**

Beginning with mail-based correspondence courses in the late 1800s and transitioning to the airwaves—both radio in the early 1920’s and television in the early 1960’s—distance learning has long been an acceptable means to further education. The first attempt to categorize distance learning programs was the University of Wisconsin who created the Articulated Instructional Media (AIM) Project in 1964 (Gooch, 1998). While the AIM Project did not prompt new programs or delivery modes, it did impact the ways in which new technology was used to promote and improve outreach education.

Unlike prior mail-based programs, the AIM Project included several assumptions: credits earned through the outreach education program would be weighted the same as if the student were a campus resident, classes offered through the outreach program articulated with those offered on campus, and outreach students could achieve the same degree as residential students. Two years after its inception, AIM became part of the University of Wisconsin Extension program (Gooch, 1998). While the absorption into the Extension program limited the scope of the outreach program, the use of evolving technology allowed others to benefit from the AIM Project's experience.

In 1969, UW Wisconsin Extension consultants traveled to the United Kingdom to help develop off-campus programs. The new British Open University changed correspondence education into what we can recognize today as distance learning, which includes computer-mediated communication and course delivery (Seels & Richey, 1994; Gooch, 1998). As technology advanced, so too did opportunities for distance education, with mail-based correspondence courses falling by the wayside with the expansion of online course offerings (Matthews, 1999). As opportunities grew, so too did the question of efficacy. Was it more or less beneficial to incorporate computer-mediated communication in the classroom?

### **The Method/Medium Schism**

Clark's (1983) meta-analysis of five decades of studies focused on the impact of mediated course delivery such as television, radio, and computers. Clark noted that regardless of the media used, media comparison studies tend to result in conclusions that imply that there is no significant difference in student outcomes. Clark warns, however, that the "no significant difference" outcome simply suggests that any changes in student

outcomes may stem from systemic differences in delivery methods. When addressing the possibility of further study, Clark concluded that “researchers refrain from producing additional studies exploring the relationship between media and learning unless a novel theory is suggested” (p. 457).

Clark’s (1983) finding of the overall lack of media impact on student outcomes caused a great deal of controversy. Kozma (1994), though he agreed in principle with Clark’s (1983) findings, wrote that media, as defined by Clark, was merely a passive vehicle through which information flowed one-way. Kozma (1994) argued that:

Learning is not the receptive response to instruction’s “delivery.” Rather, learning is an active, constructive, cognitive and social process by which the learner strategically manages available cognitive, physical, and social resources to create new knowledge by interacting with information in the environment and integrating it with information already stored in memory. (Kozma, 1994, p. 8)

Kozma felt that a deeper understanding between the relationship between media and learning would come when the interaction between the learner and the environment were considered. Kozma’s refutation of Clark’s (1983) findings highlighted the growing schism between the two philosophies of course delivery; traditional course delivery versus the use of mediating influences such as computers.

Clark (1994) defended his assertion by stating “some medium or mix of media must be present to deliver instruction. However, if learning occurs as a result of exposure to any media, the learning is caused by the instructional method embedded in the media presentation” (p. 26). Clark felt that failing to separate the medium from the method delivers results that skew research in the area of the impact of mediated course delivery.

## **(Re)Defining Distance Education**

With the technology boom of the early 90's came the need to reexamine and redefine the field of distance education. For the first time, the word "technology" was married to "instruction," and the concept of "instructional technology" was born. Instructional technology is the "theory and practice of design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation of processes and resources for learning" (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 2001). Seels and Richey (1994), working with the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT), undertook the task of redefining the field of distance education to include the technology that was quickly becoming an integral part of the classroom experience.

The mid-90's saw a shift in focus from simply broadcasting classroom content to distant students to designing content specifically for the new digital format, creating a new "virtual classroom" environment (Matthews, 1999). The US Department of Education reports that by 1995, 57% of distance education courses offered by universities were delivered by two-way interactive video, creating an interactive third space in which student and professor could interact (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999). This shift reflects the efforts of Seels and Richey (1994) and others to codify and refine the definitions used in the field of distant education in an effort to provide better, clearer services to students. With that shift in focus came new questions and concerns about the quality of education offered in these venues and just who is providing that online education.

Duderstadt (1997) wrote that the paradigm shift in education to include technology reflects the fact that many of today's students are members of the "digital generation," having spent most of their lives surrounded by varying types of increasingly

sophisticated technology (p. 80). Duderstadt further noted that it is incumbent upon the university as a hub of learning in an increasingly networked society, to encourage the integration of technology and course delivery. He states, “while this type of learning is far different from the sequential, pyramid approach of the traditional university curriculum, it may be far more effective for this generation, particularly when provided through a media-rich environment” (Duderstadt, 1997, p. 80). The author’s exhortation to embrace and support the use of technology not only in the classroom but as a means for collaboration reflects an understanding in the learning styles of students and an awareness that with advances in technology come increased means for outreach to a new and more diverse population of students.

Parisot (1997) found that with the increasing availability of technology and the subsequent increase in the demand for distance education classes, came a need for a greater understanding and awareness of the “faculty experience in the distance learning environment” (p. 5). Parisot argued that integrating faculty experience is important to the development of institutional policies supporting distance learning. Parisot’s study is important to any discussion of the growth of distance education because of the study’s focus on the impact faculty have in the eventual adoption or rejection of such programs. Parisot’s findings resulted in the development of a consensus-building model designed to serve as a guide for community colleges looking to develop distance education programs.

### **Growing Demand**

By 1995, 8% of all two- and four-year institutions offered degrees that students could complete by taking distance education courses exclusively (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Additionally, the USDOE (2010) reported that between fall

1995 and the 1997-98 academic year, the number of higher education institutions offering distance education courses increased from 33% to 44%. The USDOE also found that by 1995 “about a quarter” of US institutions that offered distance education courses offered degrees that students could complete exclusively online, and that by 1997 “the majority of higher education institutions in the United States have distance learning programs” (1999).

Matthews (1999) noted that students enrolled in distance education classes are typically older than traditional students, and that many fit their enrollment in these classes around children and family commitments. The changing demographic of the students enrolling in distance education classes reflects the changing needs of society. Matthews states that “distance education built around new technology offers one way of meeting the need for a more flexible system” as well as meeting the needs of a changing population of students (p. 61).

West (1999), too, noted that the trend of fresh-from-high-school to college student has shifted and the “growing college population are adult students over the age of 25 who are non-residential, working full-time, perhaps with a family from diverse backgrounds” (p. 1). This trend of adult learners has forced a change in the presentation and availability of classes to suit the needs of a changing population. West noted that these non-traditional students expect colleges and universities to adjust their offerings and make more accessible options than those that exist for residential students. West equates this demand for change in distance education offerings to the change in the “business of education.” She noted that if the educational institutions do not make the changes to fit the needs of the student, students would go elsewhere for their educational needs.

Further, West (1999) noted that the United States has been less an “early adopter” of the new technology-enabled distance education than other countries such as China, France, India, Korea, and others, and noted that while the large-scale outreach of those countries is laudable, some consideration must be given to the quality of the education offered on that scale. Lastly, West wrote that faculty are often resistant to such expansive distance education programs, fearing the loss of credibility and reputation of their program.

### **Resistance and Pedagogy**

With the expansion of online and distance education comes the added question of the efficacy of those programs, as well as consideration of the pedagogical implications. A major obstacle in the development of some programs has been faculty resistance based on pedagogical concerns that the technology will get in the way of the education. Carr’s (2000) study focuses on faculty resistance to online and hybrid education and how Cornell faculty overcame or addressed those issues. Carr noted that faculty concern about distance education programs has changed as technology and outreach programs have grown. Carr’s study of Cornell’s “e-Cornell” program identified four areas of concern ranging from issues of profit-centered education versus non-profits to who should be in control of the online program. One professor noted of Cornell’s new e-venture, “It just sounds flashy and transient, somehow. I don’t want to see Cornell bugger up a nice place for undergraduates to get an education by having a wild fling in the stock market” (p. A41).

Rogers (2000), too, focused on faculty resistance to incorporating technology into education and expanding the class beyond the borders of the classroom. Rogers’ findings

mirrored Carr's (2000) with regard to faculty resistance, and added the element of faculty teaching load and additional faculty development/training requirements needed to expand classroom programs as being a factor for resistance. Rogers' (2000) discussion of online educational competencies highlighted faculty concerns about online education. Rogers found that by 2000, only 20% of faculty were comfortable using computer technology in the classroom (p. 20). Would they now be "monitored" while online? What controls were in place to evaluate virtual classroom space? Would lack of faculty expertise in technology impact student outcomes? Would an online course delivery system also impact student outcomes? These questions and more added to faculty resistance to online or hybrid education. Therefore, resistance to online and hybrid teaching was not simply a matter of pedagogy, but also a matter of faculty comfort and/or experience in using technology, and how that discomfort or inexperience might impact their students.

### **The Question of Mediated Instruction and Impact on Outcomes, Redux**

The question of pedagogy and student outcomes was the focus of Russell's (2001) summative work focusing on the "no significant difference phenomenon." Russell's text examines "355 research reports, summaries, and papers that document no significant differences (NSD) in student outcomes between alternate modes of education delivery" (pp. I-1). Russell summarized his analysis of these studies in two parts. First that the NSD findings show that delivering online content does no harm to student outcomes. Second, Russell noted, is that converting to an online or partially online mode of delivery does not help improve student outcomes. However, Russell argued that developing or redesigning course content for the new media can improve the overall outcomes. Simply re-presenting material designed for the classroom is not sufficient.

Glyer-Culver (2005) conducted a survey of faculty, staff, and students focused on distance education and identified another shift in online education. The field has evolved again from the delivery of content, to the delivery of quality content to the newer concerns of basic instructional issues of plagiarism, the lack of face-to-face interaction, and immediate feedback. Glyer-Culver found within the survey that with the boom in accessibility of technology and information also come concerns about infrastructure, support, and the recurring theme of faculty training and mentoring to keep up with the changes.

### **From “Distance Education” to “e-Learning”**

The shifting landscape of online and distance education causes scholars to frequently revisit not only teaching techniques and strategies, but also the terminology we use to define our field. Guri-Rosenblit (2005) argued that distance education and “e-learning,” education presented in an online setting, are two separate entities. The terms, while often used interchangeably and overlapping in some areas, have, the author states, two distinct roles in higher education. Distance education harkens back to the days of correspondence courses or radio-based delivery of educational materials, mostly a one-way method of instruction, whereas *e-learning* refers to interactive learning delivered via electronic means, often as a synchronous, real-time delivery. The lack of distinction between the two is the reason, Guri-Rosenblit maintains, that there is a large gap between implementation of online learning opportunities and the literature that describes the effect of that process.

The gap that Guri-Rosenblit (2005) identifies may explain why what Weston (2005) describes as something thought to be a “major obstacle” to integration of

technology in the classroom and beyond was in fact a minor consideration. Weston's two-year study examined the use of educational software in undergraduate classes and he found that the lack of integration was not due to faculty fear or inability to adapt curriculum, but rather a lack of infrastructure to support new software designed to facilitate *e-learning*. This inability to support the new learning modules relates to difficulties in incorporating a reliable *e-learning* system, but does not impact the distance education courses offered, further supporting Guri-Rosenblit's (2005) suggestion that a clear distinction be made between the two terms.

When separating “*e-learning*” from distance education, it is clear that within the *e-learning* models there are also distinctions to be made. Panda and Mishra (2007) note that effective adoption and employment of technology-based education depend heavily on faculty attitude and motivation. As with prior studies noted above, the authors found that access and training play a large role in encouraging both faculty and students to successfully participate in online educational opportunities. Additionally, Panda and Mishra note that along with the opportunity for intellectual stimulation and the ability to use technology, a key factor is once again the infrastructure provided by the institution to support the technology-based academic offerings.

Prior research on the efficacy of hybrid education has shown that the debate about the quality of online education is ongoing, with some research claiming that in-class learning yields higher success rates, and other research claiming that distance/online education is beneficial. Alfred, Shults, and Seybert (2007) state, and their point falls in line with Lattuca and Stark's (2009) discussion of influences on curriculum design and reform, that:

External forces are driving heightened expectations for technology on community colleges campuses. [ . . . ] Computer technology is everywhere, cutting across income categories and education and occupation lines. [ . . . ] In a best-case scenario, distance delivery is a preferred alternative for learners and institutions seeking access to educational programs and services. (Alfred, Shults, & Seybert, 2007, p. 5)

The authors go on to say that technology has a significant impact on every aspect of education, including what, how, and where students learn. Additionally, the impact of technology “is likely to spread to even broader domains affecting not only how colleges and universities deliver services to students, but with whom they partner in delivery and how benefits and value received are measured” (Alfred et al., 2007, p. 5). In short, the delivery and content are as important as those with whom a university or college chooses to work when delivering the message.

### **Impact of Faculty and Student Satisfaction on Outcomes**

Student and faculty satisfaction with online education reflects the need for a close partnership between the higher education institution offering the course and the consumers of that knowledge—the students. Seaberry’s (2008) study supports the aforementioned “no significant difference” argument made by Russell (2001) and further noted the importance of instructor/student interaction with regard to overall success of students in the classroom. Seaberry went on to recommend that an increase in faculty development training would support long-term student satisfaction—and therefore retention—in online programs.

Faculty attitude plays an important role in the successful implementation of online

curriculum, which in turn affects student success. Tabata and Johnsrud, (2008), in a study that examines faculty participation in relation to their technology use, extend Rogers' (2000) study of the impact faculty attitudes have on successful adoption of online educational program. Their findings align with those noted above, including the importance of training and development for faculty as well as solid course design and technical support.

The software used by the university in its online course offerings has some impact on faculty choosing to adapt or redesign their courses to fit an online model. Xhen, Garthwait, and Pratt (2008) surveyed a random sampling of instructors from the University of Maine to determine what perception faculty members have about using online course management systems, to what level do faculty use these systems, and what primary factors influence faculty's use of those systems. Faculty's use of online course management systems are influenced by personal perception of the effectiveness of online education in general. Zhen, Garthwait, and Pratt's (2008) study suggests the need for a greater understanding of the "no significant difference" phenomenon discussed earlier. This study is a further example of how faculty attitude and perception influence the online learning experience.

### **Impact of Faculty and Student Satisfaction on Online Course Adoption**

Hunt (2009), too, wrote that faculty attitudes can often become a barrier to successful online programs. Hunt also points out that it is the overall institution's position that will most often influence faculty, which will, in turn, impact students. Institutions with programs focused on, or dedicated to, online learning report that a little over 62% of institutional leadership or academic officers support offering and developing online or

hybrid programs compared to only 3.7% of leadership at institutions who state they have “no interest” in online education. Once again faculty attitude and perception of online programs is shown to have an impact on success.

One of the largest attempts to study faculty and student response to online education was Lebrun, Docq, and Smidt’s (2009) comprehensive survey of the eLearning platform Claroline. Lebrun and colleagues combined direct observation of faculty and surveys of students to answer their primary research question of what changes teachers and students experienced when they transitioned to a hybrid platform of course delivery. The Claroline system, initially developed for use at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) in Belgium, has since been expanded. Lebrun and colleagues report that the Claroline system is now in use “across the world” (p. 347). The authors’ study focused on two main ideas: what and how were tools developed to add value to the educational experience; what, if any, was the relationship between “the technological richness of a pedagogy and teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the learning quality” (p. 348).

Lebrun and his colleagues report statistically significant improvement in student motivation with the move from the traditional transmission model—teacher to student via lecture—to a more interactive model—teacher to student and student-to-student discourse. Secondly, the authors found that the “richness,” of pedagogical design (i.e., the depth of content and design) was strongly related to intensity of student use. Students responded more positively to an online course that offered more and greater challenges, such as interactive discussion, activities, and exercises. Lastly, the authors note that instructors who may have begun their online teaching experience with one set of pedagogical tools were more likely to experiment and build a “pedagogical setup which

is more interactive or more motivating” (p. 360). In sum, as with a traditional model of teaching, the more engaging and stimulating the course offering, the greater the student response and the stronger the faculty drive to produce more challenging curriculum.

### **A New “Normal”**

Osika, Johnson, and Buteau (2009) report that “online education has become a staple of higher education systems” (p. 1). The authors report that per their research, more than two-thirds of higher education institutions had a variety of online courses and programs available for students. However, despite those national numbers, the authors, in their study of a single mid-western university, found that there is a significant lag in some institutions’ online course development and that lag is due to faculty resistance to incorporating online pedagogies into their curriculum. Osika and colleague’s study sought to determine what measures an institution could take to encourage faculty to move forward with online instruction. The goals were to provide institutions with strategies to encourage and increase faculty participation in online instruction. The role of faculty in the successful adoption of online programs cannot be overstressed.

Faculty resistance cannot be simply attributed to resistance to technology, but also a resistance to the perception by colleagues, parents, staff, or administrators that by teaching online they are taking the easy way out, or “phoning it in” as teachers. Parisot (1997) noted in her study that “little has been done to understand the changing role of faculty in adapting to technology and the changes in the psychological and physical environment promised by distance learning” (p. 5). Gilman (2010), too, noted that with the integration of technology into the classroom and the transition of many programs to online or partially online, (i.e. hybrid, models), grew the myth that online education or

hybrid education is somehow a lesser education than a student will receive in the classroom.

Gilman (2010) wrote that the perception extends to those who teach, who often feel as if someone questioning their work is saying, “You’re not a *real* college teacher, are you? If you were, you’d be interacting with students in a bricks-and-mortar classroom like I do” (p. 1). Gilman went on to state, “one department I have taught for at a big state university does not even acknowledge its online instructors as members of the faculty on its Web page. In the department’s eyes, I am, like Pinocchio, not a ‘real boy’” (p. 1). In response to the criticism of the online opportunities and how the instructors are perceived, Gilman offers curricular guidelines for instructors. These guidelines are remarkable in that they differ only slightly from guidelines offered to teachers in face-to-face classrooms. In the end, says Gilman, “the method of delivery itself is not *ipso facto* a blessing or a curse” (p. 2).

California State University Northridge’s President, Dr. Jolene Koester, echoes this sentiment. As a Communication Studies scholar and practitioner, as well as President of a large California university, Koester is in a unique position to offer comment. During a recent interview on the subject of online hybrid communication classes versus the “traditional” in-class model, when asked if she felt that the study of Public Speaking would be minimized or negatively impacted by a hybrid mode of delivery, Koester stated emphatically, “it’s the content, not the delivery;” in other words, if the quality of content and course design is there, the mode of the delivery should not detract from the learning opportunity of the course (J. Koester, personal interview, February, 9, 2010).

During her 2010 convocation address, Koester (2010) further elaborated on the

digital impact to the campus in coming years, noting that as “alternative models” of education become available, students will choose them. She argued that “we are on the cusp of a major shift in student demographics. Soon the incoming university class will be a cohort of ‘digital students’ who, unless universities change, will struggle to find engagement in analog schools” (para. 21). Koester went on to state that universities must “commit to a new model of collaborative learning” with students. Lastly, Koester stated that “convenience of location and timing is achieved through technology” and that while the new model of higher education may threaten old ideologies of the college experience, the university must respond to the changes in demand (para. 25).

### **Evolution of the Basic Course in Communication**

Public speaking as a separate entity has undergone an evolution similar to that of technology, making gains as a discipline, then concessions as the Academy has itself transformed. This section is subdivided to more easily trace and identify the evolution of the Public Speaking course as an entity of its own within the genre of communication studies. The literature tracing the evolutionary growth of the discipline of Public Speaking is divided into two sections: Classical Roots and a Separation from the Whole; and An Official Discipline.

#### **Classical Roots and a Separation from the Whole**

Public speaking as an oratorical art has been taught or modeled since Socrates’ time. Public oratory as an art flourished in fifth century Greece, and was considered an essential tool of public service and leadership (Dance, 2002; O’Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein, 2004). What the Greeks originally termed *techné rhétoriké*, or “speech art” was later abridged to just *rhétoriké*, or rhetoric (Ong, 1982). The canons of rhetoric as

defined by Aristotle and later Cicero have remained relatively untouched in form, and are still taught today (Dance, 2002).

The more recent conception of a course in Public Speaking did not take shape in the United States until the early 1900's. Before 1913, "Public Speaking" as a course was taught within English departments under the heading of "elocution" or "diction" (Barnes, 1952). At the 1913 Public Speaking Convention in New Haven, Connecticut, University of Wisconsin's Dr. J.M. O'Neill (1913) proposed a formal split between the departments of English and Public Speaking. O'Neill noted that the terms "elocution, oral English, argumentation, debate, and oratory were used and varied from institution to institution" (p. 232). Additionally, while he noted that the confusion of terms—as well as the "rules" guiding what was taught—was not of vital importance, O'Neill did make the argument that:

Recognition of certain standards, and a greater uniformity of practice in regulations and requirements would have a beneficial influence, directly on the efficiency of the different departments, and indirectly on the attitude toward this work of the people in other parts of the educational world. (O'Neill, 1913, p. 232)

Those words, spoken 98 years ago, ring true today as the Basic Course in Public Speaking undergoes another evolutionary transformation in course delivery and objective. O'Neill's call for change did not go unheeded and by 1915, 65% of institutions surveyed "from New York to Oregon and from Michigan to Louisiana" reported a separate department dedicated to Public Speaking (Lyon, 1915).

**An official discipline.** By the 1950's "speech education" was a formally

recognized separate discipline of study in most institutions across the country (Barnes, 1952). The next evolutionary step was to continue to refine the discipline further, differentiating between basic kinds of speaking and basic speaking situations. Barnes proposed a series of guidelines for departments to follow when structuring their programs, depending upon the emphasis or learning objectives. This across-the-board standardization was used to clearly define the role of the Basic Course. To be clear, the term “Basic Course” refers not to “basic skills” or “remediation,” but to the fundamentals of public speaking, an introduction to rhetoric, a theoretical understanding of the discipline of communication studies.

Technology was entering the early stages of the growth that would explode in the 90’s (Barnes, 2003). The late 50’s and early 60’s saw the first attempt to incorporate new technology in the public speaking realm, the use of “closed circuit television” (Dedmon & Rayborn, 1965). Closed circuit television is a method of transmitting live or prerecorded programs to a predetermined destination or audience via cable or scrambled wireless signal (McCarthy, 2011). This course delivery system was the precursor to the electronic system of today; coded delivery that is accessible only to those with the correct password or user rights. While Carpenter and Greenhill (1958) reported that there was “no significant differences in *achievement* between students taught via closed circuit television and those taught in the conventional manner” (p. 19), Dedmon and Rayborn (1965) argued that speech classes are not “amenable to the use of television as an exclusive method of instruction” (p. 295). The authors instead advocated for a hybrid model of teaching, using the closed circuit method to supplement traditional instruction.

## **Defining “Hybrid”**

As the Basic Course continued to evolve, another linguistic shift occurred when referring to the method of course delivery. While in the 50’s and 60’s the use of the word “hybrid” referred to a mixture of technology and in-class delivery, the 80’s and 90’s saw the word instead referring to a combination of course content. In some ways the delivery of the Basic Course reverted to the model of the early 1900’s. In an attempt to combat public speaking anxiety and low writing performance, many programs began to reincorporate skills that traditionally fell within the realm of English classes (Mandeville, 1993), including writing and structure.

Hugenberg (1996) wrote that the evolution of the Basic Course must include teaching “multiple communication skills,” which, he argued, should encompass interpersonal, group, interviewing, and other communication contexts, including writing. Hugenberg’s discussion of the need for extending the foundation of the Basic Course to include the above further separates the term “hybrid” from evolving technology to instead refer to multiple areas of emphasis for the course. Siddons (1998), too, noted that instructors of Public Speaking were increasing the emphasis placed upon writing and structure within the speech, again a bleed-over into the English arena. Siddons’ study found that instructors spent less time on physical and vocal delivery than on students’ ability to give concise and well-written critiques of colleagues’ speeches.

This discussion of the varying forms of the hybridization, or homogenization, of the Basic Course is critical to understanding the factors that impact the next development in the delivery of the Basic Course, the electronic/classroom hybridization. Phillips (1999) wrote of the evolution of the Basic Course in terms of our cultural history. Post

World War II civic responsibility served as the foundation for the Basic Course. Develop the oratorical skills to protect democratic institutions. The post-Vietnam era emphasized public involvement in policy decisions, the need to be aware of discourse, and to arm our students with the skills necessary to promote an ideology. The 80's reflected the trend in society for a more self-centered development of skills; learn to speak eloquently and you will profit. Lastly, Phillips noted that the 90's version of the Basic Course has developed into a more blended philosophy of instruction, including the inclusion of discussions of culture. Phillips ends his discussion of the shift in focus of the Basic Course and its delivery with the question of whether we, as communication scholars, should "seek counsel from our colleagues in composition" (p. 9).

Phillips (1999) largely ignores the use of technology in his summation of the delivery of the Basic Course. He was instead focused on the pedagogical focus of content. Clark and Jones (2001), however, bring the conversation back to the use of technology in and out of the classroom and reintroduce the term "hybrid" to apply to the classroom/online model of delivery. The authors argue that the increasing use of computer-mediated communication requires that instructors of the Basic Course "need to consider ways of helping students surmount their computer apprehension just as we have their oral communication anxiety" (p. 109). That increase in computer-mediated communication to enhance course delivery brings the question of efficacy of that mode of delivery. Clark and Jones' study compared three sections of an online Public Speaking class to three sections of a traditional model to look for differences in outcomes in four areas, including students' self-assessment of public speaking skills and outside experts' evaluation of student speaking performance. Students' self-perception of their ability

were “highly similar” across the six sections; the same results were reported with regard to the “outside experts.” In short, the authors assert that “when the courses are well taught, performance in online sections is comparable to that in traditional ones” (p. 123).

Hanson and Teven (2004), in a study of a program change that is similar to what is studied in this dissertation, also report that following blind evaluations of videotaped student speeches, evaluators found no significant difference in student speech scores between students who took a hybrid Basic Course in Public Speaking and those who took the class in the traditional in-class model. The authors report that the online students, those enrolled in the hybrid course, reported higher levels of communication apprehension than did the students in the traditional class. Hanson and Teven propose that the increased communication apprehension of the online students was due more to “technology apprehension” than to anxiety about public speaking.

Student apprehension was the focus of Benoit and Benoit’s (2006) three-year study of 2,062 students enrolled in a basic Public Speaking course. The findings of their study, comparing the effects of traditional versus web-based instruction, aligned with the findings of Hanson and Teven (2004) and Nicosia (2005) who assert that there is no significant difference in the overall scores of student speeches, expert ratings, and exam scores. Benoit and Benoit also reported that a small portion of students reported a preference for the traditional model over the online/hybrid model studied.

In direct contrast to Benoit and Benoit’s (2006) report of student satisfaction, Carnevale’s (2006) account of the University of Idaho’s transition to a hybrid Basic Course reported higher student satisfaction overall with both course content and delivery. Students reported that they enjoyed the expanded opportunity to continue classroom

discussions in the online forum. Carnevale's observations lend weight to an area that must be considered when considering a transition to a hybrid model; student satisfaction and expectation.

### **Organizational Change in Higher Education**

Organizational change and the manner in which change is implemented is an important element in this study. Top-down ordered change, change that is ordered from above with no input from those impacted, has personal and personnel implications that cannot be disregarded (Kezar, 2005a). How that change directive is framed, interpreted, and implemented will impact the success for which the initial impetus for change occurred.

Schein (1984) wrote of the need for understanding culture and institutional dynamics in order to effect long-term change. His 1984 research identified three levels of institutional culture: a) artifacts and creations, which are visible but often not decipherable to leadership; b) values, which include espoused institutional values, assumptions, and non-debatable values such as "students come first;" and c) "basic assumptions" that are the base of institutional culture. These basic assumptions are often taken for granted, invisible, or preconscious (p. 4). Schein noted that institutional leaders need to understand the need within the organization for order and consistency.

Harris (1994) argued that effective change at the individual and group level involves an understanding of social cognition. For top-down change directives to succeed, those ordering the change must understand the schemas in which the affected are operating. Schemas, noted Harris, refer to "cognitive structures in which an individual's knowledge is retained and organized [...] and also direct information

acquisition and processing” (p. 310). In other words, the schema is the framework of understanding in which we operate. That framework guides our responses to change and our ability to make sense of what is being asked of us. For organizational change to be effective, organization directors must make an effort to understand not only the implications of their decisions but the social settings in which those directives take place. Directors must also build a bridge between affected areas of the organization to allow impacted members of the organization the means by which to make sense of the new direction and/or directive.

Bartunek and Moch (1987) also addressed the importance of how a cognitive approach can impact change initiatives within an organization. The authors discussed first-order and second-order change and how these differing change models affect an organization. First-order change is change that occurs in incremental stages within existing structures of an organization. Second-order change involves a radical shifting of institutional paradigms. An understanding of these change schemas can enable campus leadership to successfully implement a change initiative and to see a long-term result of those changes.

Eckel, Hill, and Green (1998) note that while there is often a push in higher education to make a *change*, many often end up with the perception that nothing ever *really* changes. They report that some critics of higher education claim that for change to happen within a university it must be radical, foundation-shaking change. The authors argue that for change to be effective and long lasting, leaders must first begin to understand the culture of an organization. Eckel and colleagues noted that at institutions that exemplified their definition of “transforming,” leadership and faculty worked

together to redefine goals and assumptions. The authors wrote that the change team “developed change agendas designed to alter cultural values, they sought changes that were deep and pervasive, they were prepared for the change process to take substantial time, and they were intentional about what they wanted to happen” (p. 6). Transformational change, change that permeates the organization and affects every level of the institution, is the most effective means of permanent change. Eckel and colleagues, note that “at the end of the day, the personal, political, and cultural aspects of change will make or break a change initiative” (p. 111).

Kezar (2001, 2005c, 2005a, 2005b), in her extensive research focused upon organizational change in higher education, advocates a collaborative change approach. The problem with that approach, per a research subject, is that “we keep trying to force collaborative innovations into a structure and culture that supports individual work” (Kezar, 2005b, p. 2). One of the keys to addressing that frustration is to create a narrative within the organization focused on external pressures. Aligning campus culture and external pressures can facilitate acceptance and cooperation with change initiatives.

Building on his early ‘80’s research in organizational change, Schein (2004) offers a more recent model for managed culture change within an institution. Echoing Bartunek and Moch’s (1987) research in ordered change and Eckel, Hill, and Green’s (1998) discussion of transformational change, Schein (2004) added to his model the step of “cognitive restructuring.” Cognitive restructuring includes reframing old concepts to match new meanings as defined by a change initiative team, and also provides role models and training for staff to develop their own solutions within the new paradigm. Schein also noted that while there is no perfect leader or perfect leadership style, “the

unique function of leadership that distinguishes it from management and administration is the concern for culture. [ . . . ] Leaders begin the culture creation process” (p. 54).

Shults (2008) supports this assertion when he states that “top-down, problem-focused management structures are inadequate for competing in the ever-changing postsecondary knowledge industry” (p. 133). Shults makes the case for using positive psychology to initiate change, and noted that “positive psychology revisits the average person with an interest in finding out what works, what is right, and what is improving” (p. 139). Traditional management and change initiative techniques will not work in the changing landscape of a technologically based system of higher education and Shults emphasizes the importance of “valuing the human element” as a key to successfully continue to serve students in varying models of course delivery.

Online education, so often situated outside of a college’s normal structure, often has an unforeseen impact on existing departments and processes. Mitchell (2009) noted that because online education involves technology, there is often a blurring of lines between administration, academic departments, and student services. Mitchell wrote that this blurring of boundaries is a surface, or first-order change, but that the longer effects of online education can have greater reach. These second-order, or cultural, changes have a deeper impact “because the philosophies behind those changes challenge underlying values and beliefs” (p. 2).

Second-order change occurs when guiding frameworks, or schemas as noted above, are altered (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; Harris, 1994; Kezar, 2001). Online education challenges the fundamental beliefs of institutional leadership and faculty, forcing a new perspective and new modes of delivery on a long-established tradition.

Add to that the increasingly fluid curriculum and adaptive nature of the networks and course delivery systems. These changing landscapes make it difficult for those who deliver education in a traditional format to grasp the validity of a new and evolving system. Change within a system requires buy-in and investment by the members.

### **Summary**

The history of distance education is rich and varied, and based in a sincere desire to serve more students more effectively. A repeating theme throughout the evolution of distance education is that despite the changes in modes of delivery, one thing has remained at the forefront; the question of the impact of changing modalities and technologies on the quality of education offered. Time and again the results show that there is no significant difference in student outcomes when the method of delivery is changed.

The evolution of the Basic Course in Public Speaking has followed, in some ways, the demands of culture and society. Beginning with a sincere desire to separate from a discipline that did not serve the origins of the art of rhetoric, the Basic Course's evolution to a rich and varied course of study demonstrates the sincere desire of educators to provide students with a solid foundation upon which they can build a platform for personal and professional advancement. Additionally, becoming an entity of its own allows for the advancement of political ideologies that can serve the greater community.

Higher education organizational change, too, has begun to reflect the mores of our culture and the greater emphasis being placed on open and transparent leadership. No longer is it feasible to simply "order" change; change must instead come from solid coalition-building and an investment in time and concern for members.

Finally, this brief overview of literature serves to tie together the discussion of distance education, the evolution of the Basic Course, and the discussion of change initiatives in education. In the next chapter we will explore the methodology used to explore and understand these relationships. The goal of this study is to understand and derive meaning from the lived experience of the department to a directed change initiative with far-reaching pedagogical implications. This study fills the gap between what is understood about distance education and its impact on students and faculty, and how the change to those online modalities can be smoothly accomplished to better serve the whole.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The overarching research questions that are addressed in this study focused on how a department made the top-down decision to redesign a course fundamental to the university, one required of every undergraduate student in order to graduate. The specific research questions for this dissertation focused on the pedagogical implications of a hybrid Public Speaking program and the perceptions of the faculty teaching in that environment. This study was a survey of faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching Public Speaking in a hybrid environment, and their experiences with that transition. The study also included steps taken by both faculty and department administration to facilitate the move to the hybrid model, and what, if any, pedagogical changes such a move entailed.

This chapter is organized into the following sections: research design, research setting, sample and data sources, research questions, instruments and procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis, and the role of the researcher.

### **Research Design**

This study used a phenomenological methodology with content analysis from the grounded theory tradition. Responses were analyzed and coded for thematic similarities and those themes then ordered contextually.

### **Phenomenology in Qualitative Research**

Philosophers Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, and many more, consider phenomenology to be the foundation of philosophy (Smith, 2008). Phenomenology is a discipline centered on the lived experience, the qualities of hearing, seeing, doing, and sensing (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Smith, 2008). In

more recent years the definition of phenomenology has expanded to include the importance of objects, events, or tools that are experienced in our world. Littlejohn (2001) states that phenomenology is “the study of the knowledge that comes from consciousness, or the way you come to understand objects and events by consciously experiencing them” (p. 184). Phenomenologists look at events from the perspective of the participants, those who have lived the experience. Historically, Husserl argued that phenomenology studied the structure of various types of experience while Heidegger argued that it was the act of interpretation of events that shaped phenomenological study (Smith, 2008).

It is to Heidegger to whom one must turn for a deeper understanding of phenomenology, simply because of his ontological understanding. Heidegger (1964) wrote that he “shall define the word “World” with a capital “W” to suggest the already interpreted context of experience” (p. 671). He further defines or categorizes his “Worlds” into separate areas of “life-World” to mean the nature of things as they are experienced. Heidegger was resistant to the idea of using language to define an object or experience; on the other hand, he is quoted as saying “in language things signify a World with a history (a social place) and thus a future” (Kockelmans, 1972).

Deetz (1973a, 1973b) states that it is critical that the researcher learn to distinguish “interpretive-understanding from subjective insights based on empathy” (1973b, p. 140). In other words, researchers must be able to separate their own innate or in-group observations of the event and interpret based only upon subjective insights from the outside. It is from their understanding and interpretation of language and the language of those observed that researchers derive meaning. He further noted that

researchers engage in a normative paradigm, which is generally used to understand and interpret human action (1973a). Specifically, Deetz asserted,

the normative paradigm achieves a *literal* description of the behavioral phenomena, which is subsequently explained or given meaning by correlation with certain psychological or sociological states-e.g., attitudes, roles, conditioning histories and so forth-or by being shown as an instance of some law involving those states. (Deetz, 1973b, p. 141)

In short, the normative paradigm—the “norming” or interpretation of outcomes to fit within a researcher’s framework of knowledge—becomes an exercise in literal classification of behavior. Deetz (1973a) claimed that this enables the researcher to be wholly objective because of first-hand knowledge of the innate understanding underlying the identified behavior. The classification of behavior can only come from an awareness and understanding of the relationship of words to behavior.

Deetz (1973b) offered three assertions about phenomenology. First, that “knowledge is by necessity conscious knowledge” (p. 42). Knowledge is gained by experience; it is intentional and “meaningful experience of consciousness” (p. 43). Deetz’s second perspective relies heavily on Heidegger’s aforementioned concept of the “World with a capital ‘W’” (1964, p. 671) in which Heidegger argued that events are not experienced as isolated incidents, but instead within the context in which they happen. Deetz (1973b) expands upon Heidegger’s argument and states that an object “is constituted—given its specific nature—only in the human encounter” (p. 44), or, as Littlejohn (2001) puts it, “the meaning of a thing consists of the potential of that thing in ones life” (p. 185). Lastly, Deetz’s (1973b) third perspective is that it is in language that

we understand meaning; that prior to language we are unable to articulate the experience we have just lived. The method of studying language, Deetz argued, naturally proceed from a lived experience. Deetz proposed that “changes in approach to language study are thought to parallel man’s shift from a technological society to a humanistic one” (p. 51). Language, it seems, is the key to understanding an experience.

Blitz (1995) returns us to a discussion of Heidegger and his discussion of the essence of technology. Heidegger (1954) wrote that “technology is an instrument to achieve human ends” (p. xxvii). Basically, Heidegger felt that technology was not *the* thing, it was a way *to* an understanding of a thing, event, or state of being. State-of-the-art computer technology in Heidegger’s time was the IBM 650, a vacuum-tube logic, drum-memory, decimal computer operated by punch-card technology (IBM Corporation, 1955). Blitz (1995) noted that Heidegger held the opinion that life was dominated by technology and that it was through technology that we would be able to discover what truly *is*. Roth (1997) tells us that Heidegger wrote “objects and events are never experienced as isolated or by themselves, but come given with their function and relevance for ongoing activities” In other words, objects and events do not exist in a vacuum.

Gibbs (2010) states that while Heidegger’s early work provides us with an invaluable understanding of the nature of being and the importance of language, it is his discussion of technology that is his greatest contribution to understanding meaning. Heidegger was a linguist of the first order, therefore the language he used to express his understanding of the role and essence of technology in our lives is critical to interpreting his meaning.

The relationship between language and thought is explored by Hirsch (2010) who examines the work and meaning of another early phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl. Unlike Heidegger, Husserl argued that meaning and understanding are co-constructed by shared experience of a lived event. Hirsch wrote that Husserl's position was that it is in the shared interpretation of "inter-individual consciousness in relation to topics and events under development" that meaning is made. For Husserl, the objective was not what was produced but the shared understanding of the existing work. This is in direct contrast to Heidegger (1971) who argued that the work produced must be more than useable, that it is the production of the work that we derive meaning. And deriving meaning from the production of something is the heart of phenomenological study.

This study was an online survey of full-time department faculty stake-holders and part-time instructors to understand the lived experience of department members as they transitioned to the new model. Study respondents included teaching associates responsible for delivery of the Public Speaking course content and a one-on-one interview with faculty member who served as the Basic Course Director during pilot and first two years of the new model.

### **A Grounded-Theory Approach to Content Analysis**

The data from the two online surveys—one for full-time faculty and one for Basic Course instructors—were returned in electronic form. The contents were easily searchable and categorized. Data from both surveys and the interview with the Course Director were analyzed for thematic similarities. Once those identified themes were validated by member-checks, responses were grouped within those themes, with the data from each survey kept separated to understand the experience from the perspective of

both groups. The interview with the Course Director served to provide a contextual and historical framework from which to view and understand the data.

Content analysis is defined by Holsti (1969) as a “technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (p. 14) and is appropriate for this study because it is the most efficient method of collecting thoughtful responses from a large number of potential respondents. Stemler (2001) wrote that content analysis can enable a researcher to filter large volumes of data in a systematic fashion, and he continues that content analysis is a useful tool for examining “trends and patterns” (p. 4). Content analysis, according to Robson (2002), is an unobtrusive, i.e., non-reactive, measure of something produced for another purpose—typically, a text existing before the study employing this method. However, this method was adapted for use in interpreting responses to the survey instruments. While true content analysis is typically a methodology that is used to examine a text that was created before a study, content analysis is the most efficient means by which to codify the data returned in the surveys.

### **Research Setting**

The institution selected for this study has an enrollment of approximately 36,000, supported by a faculty of more than 4,000. The University has nine colleges which offer 64 baccalaureate degrees, 52 master’s degrees, three doctoral degrees, and 55 teaching credential programs (GradSchools, 2012). The institution’s student population is a mixture of mostly Latino and White students, with a smaller percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander, Black (non-Latino), and American Indian/Alaskan Native, and approximately 1,800 with Non-resident Alien status (U.S. University Directory, 2010). The institution

reports an 83% four-year success and progress rate for its undergraduates (College Portraits, 2009).

The communications studies department at the university has nine full-time faculty, 14 part-time faculty, and a rotating cadre of 14 graduate teaching assistants. The department of communication studies offers an undergraduate minor as well as graduate programs that focus on research areas ranging from Communication Theory to Rhetorical Studies. The department offers an average of 28 sections each semester of the Basic Course in Public Speaking, a required course for all undergraduate students enrolled in the university. The enrollment of each course is capped at 25, resulting in a total of approximately 700 students enrolled in the Basic Course each semester.

The Basic Course is taught mainly by Graduate Teaching Assistants under the supervision of a basic Course Director, with additional sections taught by adjunct faculty. The Course Director provides the Teaching Assistants (TAs) with a skeleton framework of the course but leaves it to the TA to construct a course around that skeleton. The TAs are given training before their first semester in classroom management and teaching techniques, and meet monthly with the Basic Course Director to discuss issues and exchange ideas and successful pedagogical practices. Additional training in the new online classroom software was provided.

The structure of the course design reinforces the need that students come to their once-weekly face-to-face class meeting already having completed the quiz on that week's reading assignment(s). The quizzes are administered through the online site, thus adding another step in student accountability in preparing for class.

Table 3.1 represents the original timetable for implementing the transition to the

hybrid model of teaching Public Speaking and Table 3.2 represents the final implementation schedule, allowing for adjustments made following research and the pilot program (Course Director, personal communication, April 5, 2010).

Table 3.1

*Original Proposed Timetable*

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Fall 2007	Develop pilot course. This will consist of collecting and analyzing information pertinent to course development.
Spring 2008	Offer pilot course in 2-4 sections Develop assessment tools, and train TAs/Instructors for hybrid course
Summer 2008	Assess pilot courses and make changes. Complete plan to offer redesigned course in Fall 08.
Fall 2008	Offer redesigned course in larger numbers as hybrid Basic Course. Begin search for a new faculty member with the rank of Assistant Professor/Director of the Basic Course, to run the hybrid program as it is phased into all Basic Course offerings.

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Table 3.2

*Final Implementation Schedule*

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Summer 2008	Develop curriculum (work with publisher to create course management system for the on-line portion of the course) Develop additional course material for on-line site
Fall 2008	Implement revised pilot Continue assessment in 4 sections Continue curriculum development
Spring 2009	Implement in 6 sections Prepare training for TAs/Instructors Pre-training for TAs/Instructors in spring On-line training for TAs/Instructors in summer

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Fall 2009	Training for TAs/Instructors in summer 09 Implement hybrid in all sections Assessment
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### **Sample and Data Sources**

Two separate online surveys were created, one for part-time faculty and TA's who made the transition to the new model, and a second survey for full-time department faculty who did not teach the hybrid model, but are department stakeholders. A third data source was the faculty member who served as the Course Director for both the hybrid and the implementation of the overall transition. Survey respondents were identified based upon their having either taught or are currently teaching sections of the hybrid Public Speaking classes. Graduate Teaching Assistants taught the bulk of the courses, so the majority of research respondents were Teaching Assistants. Each semester approximately 28 sections were taught by 12-14 Teaching Assistants (TAs) or adjunct faculty, each teaching one or two sections as needed. One-half of the cadre of TAs changed each academic year, for a total of 24-28 potential TA respondents and four adjunct faculty respondents. The TA's and/or adjuncts were wholly responsible for day-to-day lesson-planning, working within a pre-designed course shell. What each instructor put into that shell was the responsibility of that instructor; therefore, in effect, each TA was functioning as an adjunct faculty member for two sections of the course. Four of the potential respondents were adjunct faculty who taught the Basic Course during or post-transition to the hybrid model.

Full-time faculty were identified by their role/rank in the department as Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Full Professor, and therefore were considered

department stakeholders. These full-time faculty did not teach the hybrid model but form the core of the department. The Course Director for the hybrid transition was among those ranked faculty positions noted above.

Respondents were notified of the study by email and contacted to ask if they were willing to participate in the study. All potential volunteers were provided with detailed information about the study and assured that their responses would remain confidential. The California State University, Northridge Standing Advisory Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects approval for this research study is dependent upon all subjects being given informed consent after reading a description of the investigation. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix C of this study.

### **Research Questions**

This study used phenomenology as a means for understanding the following questions:

- RQ1. How do instructors experience an institutionally required transition from a traditional to hybrid format for teaching the Basic Course in Public Speaking?
- RQ2. What factors facilitate a smooth transition to teaching the Basic Course in Public Speaking in a hybrid format?
- RQ3. What barriers are commonly experienced in transitioning from a traditional pedagogical model to a new media mode of delivery?
- RQ4. What departmental dynamics facilitate and/or hinder a successful transition?

## **Instrument**

The data collection for this study was conducted using two online surveys designed for two different constituents, as well as the in-person interview with the Course Director. There are several reasons for using an online versus an in-person survey, foremost among them being that using the online format allows a greater flexibility on the part of both author and study participants, enabling the collection of data in a more economically feasible manner (Wright, 2006). Additionally, the online system also allows for a return of data in a format that is conducive to efficient data coding and thematic analysis. Online survey methodology also reinforces the use of technology in achieving a goal, a principle that is an important consideration when studying the use of technology in education. Lastly, the anonymous survey design for respondents allows participants the freedom to freely express and articulate their experience in the transition to the new media model without fear of repercussion or censure.

The instrument questions in Appendix B were developed from an initial list of questions that provided the best opportunity for responses that would address the purpose of the study (See Appendix A). Robson (2002) noted that survey questions must be designed to answer research questions. Robson also states that a “good questionnaire not only provides a valid measure of the research questions, but also gets the cooperation of the respondents and elicits accurate information” (p. 242).

In his discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of electronic surveys as a data collection tool, Robson (2002) wrote that the reliability and validity of data collected can be impacted by the technical proficiency of those running the survey. Confusing or ambiguous questions can lead to a problem of internal validity where the data collected

does not accurately reflect what the respondents are thinking or feeling. Additionally, when conducting a survey, a great deal of attention must be paid to the sampling, which Robson states is closely linked to the external validity as well (p. 260). The validity of the coding and interpretation of responses were addressed by follow-up email with survey respondents who have indicated a willingness to be contacted again to confirm result validity. Identified codes and themes were presented to respondents to ensure the correct interpretation of responses to survey questions.

Creswell (2008) noted that online surveys are a quick and easy method of data collection, though he also adds that the use of such a survey may limit results as the data returned depends upon the user's comfort with technology (p. 396). Because this study focuses on faculty response to the phenomenon of transitioning to the hybrid format, the author foresees few technological barriers to respondents' participation. Potential respondents were identified based upon their position as instructors or Graduate Teaching Assistants at either before or during the transition to the hybrid model. Full-time faculty were identified based upon having been with the department before, during, or after the transition to the hybrid model.

Potential respondents to this study were required to complete a single online questionnaire via the Internet, hosted at SurveyGizmo. The online survey tool chosen offered free access for educational research and offered customizable options to return data anonymously, secure data collected, and not have returned data stored online after a specified window of time (SurveyGizmo, 2012).

The survey for the instructors who taught the hybrid class asked respondents to provide basic demographic information, including their status at the time they taught the

course—TA, adjunct, full-time faculty—and years of teaching experience. Seventeen open-ended questions were presented to the respondents asking for thoughtful narrative responses (See Appendix B). Space was provided for lengthy responses and respondents are able to return to prior pages to modify their answers if a subsequent question sparked a more in-depth response to an earlier prompt.

A second online survey, presented to full-time faculty members, was used to identify and understand what communications processes were used to achieve faculty buy-in to the change in course delivery from the traditional model to the new media method. A sample of this second survey, designed for department stakeholders in the department who did—and do—not, teach in an online or hybrid format is important to gain an understanding of the organizational change process that took place within the department from the perspective of those entrenched in the existing system. This survey can be found in Appendix D of this study.

To understand the decision-making process that led to the adoption of the hybrid model and provide context for the overall change, an individual face-to-face interview was conducted with the director of the hybrid pilot project. Those questions can be found in Appendix E.

### **Survey Development**

The initial survey instrument for the hybrid instructors was pilot tested upon one current instructor who was hired before the transition to the hybrid model took place. The test respondent was chosen because prior to his work at the university he had a clear expectation of, and experience with, teaching in a traditional in-class model. He was also selected based upon his reputation for quality and dynamic instruction and his experience

after one year of teaching in the hybrid platform. The pilot test of the survey was conducted in person to help further refine the research questions. That in-person interview took place in a campus research library on Monday, March 29, 2010.

The respondent for the pilot study was informed that the questions he was answering were a part of a pilot study and that the purpose was to refine and adjust the survey questions as needed. He was also advised of the upcoming expanded study and invited to participate in that when the time came. As both respondent and colleague, the test respondent was extremely helpful in refining some of the original redundant questions and offered viable suggestions for alternatives (See Appendix A). His feedback and participation was critical to the successful development of the survey instrument as it now exists. Following the small pilot study, the initial list of questions was revised and then reviewed by the chair of this dissertation committee and can be found in Appendix B of this Dissertation.

The faculty survey was developed Kezar's (2001, 2005c) guidelines for effecting successful change initiatives in higher education. Open-ended questions asked respondents to elucidate their experience with the directed change from the department Chair with regard to the new course delivery system.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Surveys are an effective way to capture the demographics of a community, as well as providing the researcher with a 'feel' for the attitudes of the group as a unit through emergent themes or word usage and context (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) note "surveys can offer a comprehensive look at an entire social unit" (p. 119). Surveys can also be used to identify trends within a group. Fifteen former and

current teaching associates, seven former and current adjunct faculty members, and nine full-time department faculty were contacted via email prior to the release of the online surveys to obtain their initial permission to receive the email link. A letter of introduction of the study was sent with the initial email and any person who asked not to be contacted for the study was removed from the final email contact list (See Appendix C).

The survey was posted to the SurveyGizmo secure site and an email sent to all potential participants announcing the live link, and providing a secure password with which to log in. The announcement informed participants that the link would be live—and the survey active—for a 30-day period. After 15 days, a reminder email was sent to all participants, and another at 25 days with a warning that the survey would close in five days. Participants were invited to opt-out of these reminders if they chose. Participants submitted their responses through SurveyGizmo where their answers were cataloged and archived for the duration of the study plus one day. Data were returned in a tab-delimited format and that file imported into Microsoft Excel for analysis. Survey responses on SurveyGizmo were purged and a confirmation email of that purging is stored with the paper hard-copies of the returned data.

For each survey, each question on the site appeared on a separate screen. The instructor survey was the only survey that had a “required” response, and that question was to determine whether the respondent had been a part of the pilot program. Respondents were able to save and edit their responses, and the survey designed so that, until they selected the final “submit” button, respondents could return to prior answers to modify or expand upon responses already provided. Respondents were only able to login once to the survey site; this was to prevent one respondent from completing the survey

twice.

Research data responses for both full-time department stakeholders and hybrid instructors were returned anonymously, identified only by a login date. Each user was assigned a number when they logged in to take the survey, and the number assigned corresponded to the order in which they logged into the system. No system, IP, or any other identifying information was logged or retained for any respondent to the survey. Only the researcher and the faculty member who was the Basic Course Director at the time of the transition to the hybrid model knew the names of potential respondents among the TAs and adjunct faculty.

Participants involved in the study were informed that a summary of results of the initial coding to check for validity would be sent to them by email, and they were invited to respond to correct the researcher's interpretation of emergent themes. Participants were sent a summary of results of the research study by email following the completion of the research, as well as an electronic copy of the final dissertation if they indicated a desire for same.

Although the storage and maintenance of electronic data is never completely secure, the participants were advised that all measures possible were taken to maintain the privacy of the participants. At no time was any email sent to participants as a whole with any information attached that would identify them to other participants. All data collected was kept on paper or on non-networked electronic media, and will be kept in a locked file in the possession of the researcher for a period of at least three years from completion and no longer than ten years, after which they will be securely destroyed.

The interview with the director of the transition program was recorded for

transcription purposes only, and that recording destroyed immediately upon completion of transcription. Transcribed data will be kept in a locked file in the possession of the researcher for a period of at least three years from completion and no longer than ten years, after which it, too, will be securely destroyed.

### **Data Analysis**

The content analysis methodology of analyzing the responses produced themes and patterns, through application of what Robson (2002) labeled the “immersion approach,” which relies on researcher insight, intuition, and creativity (p. 458). Patton (1990) said that the purpose of qualitative analysis is to give an explanation to the essential core of experience of a phenomenon for an individual or group. The creative process of uncovering themes, patterns, and categories requires making careful judgments about what data is meaningful and significant. The underlying method of analysis in grounded theory is the identification of codes, concepts, and categories that emerge through constant comparison of the data.

Applying Holsti’s (1969) guidelines, and Glaser and Straus’ (1967) approach to identifying emergent themes, the data were reviewed and subsequently coded. Berelson (1952) wrote, “content analysis stands or falls by its categories” (p. 95). In this study, categories were developed for coding each response given in the surveys. Within the categories sub-groupings were developed based upon prior literature in hybrid or online education, particularly the emergent trends discussed in the literature review. While Holsti (1969) noted that categories must be mutually exclusive, exhaustive and independent of one another, as is often the case with thematic analysis of qualitative data, the categories identified below are not mutually exclusive and thus the responses may

relate to more than one theme and express aspects of multiple theories. Therefore, Holsti served as a guide with which to frame the categories, and Glaser and Straus' (1967) grounded theory approach was used for identifying emergent themes through comparison. Additionally, Glaser and Straus' (1967) grounded theory approach of grouping similar responses into categories provided the foundation for framing responses.

Stemler (2001) noted that it is also important in qualitative research to not rely on simply a word-frequency count. Additionally, Stemler wrote, it is crucial for the researcher to consider the context in which the keyword is found and to "bear in mind that each word may not represent a category equally well" (p. 10). These principles guided the analysis and coding of the open ended responses to both the instructor and faculty surveys.

### **Framing the Responses Within the Organizational Lens**

To create a context for understanding and grouping responses with regard to the overarching question of the impact of the imposed change upon the department, responses were evaluated with the following researchers' comments in mind. In 2005, Kezar (2005a) found that "campus decision-making mechanisms were not prepared to handling increasingly complex issues [...] of technology, diverse and changing populations, competition, financial stress, and globalization" (p. 634). Kezar also found that radical change from above can result in negative outcomes, "such as lowered morale and lack of commitment" (p.640). Additionally, Kezar noted that, "radical change has many negative consequences; gradual change and innovation appears to be a more promising route" (p. 662). Finally, Kezar also suggested that "the frustration, lowered morale, distrust, and confusion that emerged as a result of the radical change process can be

crippling” to a change process (p. 662)

Shults (2008), echoed Kezar’s (2005a) findings, stating that “traditional management techniques and operating procedures are ill equipped to provide exceptional value to stakeholders in the changing economy, which is based on the increasing importance of human capital” (p. 155). Shults also wrote that “valuing the human element” is a critical part of creating a thriving learning organization engaged in transcendent leveraging. Transcendent leveraging refers to “an organization’s engagement in leveraging to such a degree that resources are amplified to a previously unattainable level through the identification of the appropriate levers and the presence of organizational hope, optimism, and resilience” (Luthans, 2010, p. 123).

It is with an understanding of Kezar’s (2005a), Shults’ (2008), and Luthans’ (2010) conceptualization of effective change in higher education Institutions that the participant’s responses were evaluated and grouped into thematic categories.

### **Validity and Trustworthiness**

Quantitative research relies heavily on the concepts of validity and reliability as a means of measuring the value of research findings (Creswell, 2008). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) note that the question of validity in qualitative research has to do with the “truth value” of the observations (p. 239). Reliability in qualitative research, however, has more to do with the consistency of observations rather than the measurement of results (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) and Creswell (2008) wrote that member checks and peer review are important to validity as well as the reflexivity of the researcher. Once the data from both the electronic surveys was collected and coded, a general grouping of

identified themes were sent to each set of respondents to confirm that the analysis and themes match the respondents' expectations. Respondents offered no suggestions for changes to the identified themes and noted that the themes were consistent with their experiences. The identified themes were also sent to the Course Director for review, providing an additional member check of the validity of responses.

Additional confirmation of interpreted results were checked by the use of triangulation. Rossman and Rallis (2003) wrote that multiple points or sources of data can be used to build a bigger picture of the phenomenon being investigated. They note that "this helps ensure that you have not studied only a fraction of the complexity that you seek to understand" (p. 69). Triangulating the responses from instructors who transitioned to, or taught in, the new hybrid model, the faculty stake-holders within the department, and administrators and change-agents responsible for the transition helped construct a larger picture and place responses within a greater context for understanding.

### **Role of the Researcher**

While this study was conducted as an online survey, some understanding of field observation techniques must be discussed. The author's involvement within the department requires an adaptation of certain techniques used in sociological field observations. Gold (1958) wrote that the "participant-observer" role tends to minimize problems inherent in pretending to be a member of a group in order to observe that body. As a participant-observe, both research and subjects are aware of the role of the researcher. However, Gold noted, the participant-observer role comes with its own risks. The same familiarity that allows deep access within the studied community also allows for the danger of the researcher to become too much a "participant" and to lose the

objectivity required of pure research.

The author of this study has taught the Public Speaking course within the department, both in the traditional and hybrid mode of delivery, at times concurrently, since 2006. The author also assisted in the development of the department's current hybrid model. Therefore the researcher has certain biases that were mitigated by performing validity checks of the identified codes and themes with the respondents.

The role of the researcher in this phenomenological study is to collect impressions and experiences and to report them in a summative fashion (Robson, 2002). Although the researcher has experience in designing Internet-based courses, the researcher's role was not to evaluate the effectiveness of the course design as a whole, but rather to report on the findings and reflections of participants.

### **Researcher Bias**

Robson (2002) states that researcher bias refers to what the researcher may bring to the situation in terms of assumptions and preconceptions. These may affect the kinds of questions asked or the selection of data chosen for reporting and analysis. Some researcher bias toward the use of the hybrid model was found during the pilot study of the survey tool, and the questions adjusted accordingly. Additionally, having others, specifically the original Basic Course in Public Speaking director, and a colleague of the researcher, review the study and findings checked other possible researcher effects.

### **Summary**

Chapter Three included the design and methodology for this study, which follows a phenomenological qualitative approach. This approach was selected because the researcher was interested in understanding the lived experience of those involved in

transitioning a traditionally brick-and-mortar subject into a hybrid model of course delivery. Additionally, this researcher wanted to discover what best-practices emerged from that process of change and how the new model could be applied to different institutions. The open-ended survey data provided the researcher with information that created a textured landscape from which to draw generalized conclusions to be analyzed in the next chapters of this dissertation.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The findings below are presented based upon survey responses of participants in the study. Findings are presented in categories and include direct quotes from participants, organized by theme. The themes that emerged from a review of the data are categorized below and organized conceptually, with instructor and faculty responses presented separately.

Twenty-two part-time adjuncts and/or teaching associates were identified and invited to participate in the study because they either taught the new model as part of the pilot program or taught Public Speaking during and/or after the transition of all 28 sections to the new model. The full-time department stakeholders and Course Director were members of the department at the time of the pilot and the implementation of the hybrid model. To encourage thoughtful responses, the survey questions were open-ended and invited participants to expand upon their answers and to offer any insights they felt might contribute to the study. The introduction to each survey reiterated the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents' answers. Confidentiality and anonymity were also emphasized during the one-on-one interview with the Course Director, and the results of that interview were analyzed with the faculty responses to preserve anonymity. The semi-structured interview with the Course Director focused on the Director's experience as both faculty/department stakeholder and developer of the pilot program and overall hybrid course transition program.

The in-person interview with the Course Director helped to create a contextual and historical framework through which to interpret the results found. For ease of understanding, teaching associates and adjunct faculty who taught the hybrid version of

the Basic Course are referred to in the findings below as “instructors,” while the full-time faculty who did not teach the hybrid course are identified as “faculty.” For further ease of interpretation, the results of each survey analysis are broken down into those two categories of instructor and faculty. Five major themes each emerged from the survey of instructors and faculty. Each set of responses suggested a different layer of sub-themes, with a common theme of “Community” and a sub-theme of “Integrating the Learning Space” emerging as a shared theme between the two response groups. Table 4.1 below provides a synopsis of all of the identified themes found in this study.

Table 4.1

*Identified Themes From All Survey Responses*

Instructor Responses	Faculty Responses
Classroom Community A New Space for Connection A Reduced Connection	Community Within the Classroom Within the Department
Student Motivation	Preconceptions of Course Quality
Pedagogy and Praxis Redefining the Classroom Integrating the Learning Spaces	Expected Negative Impact on Student Outcomes
Collaboration and Support Collegial Support Adequate Training Technical Support	No Voice in the Decision Participation in the Implementation
Uneasiness Moving Public Speaking Online Technical Course Management	Importance of Research Benefit of a Pilot Program
	Consistent Content Integrating the Learning Spaces

**Summary of Procedure**

Twenty-two former and current teaching associates, seven former and current adjunct faculty members, and nine full-time department faculty were sent the link to one

of two surveys specifically designed to gather information about their experiences. The faculty and instructor surveys were created and hosted on SurveyGizmo's site, with each question appearing on a separate screen. Only one question was marked "required," and that was on the instructor survey asking if they has been a part of the initial hybrid pilot program. Respondents had the opportunity to save and edit their responses, and also to return to their prior answers to add, or modify their earlier responses to questions. Respondents were notified that once their survey was submitted to the site they would no longer have access to the survey or be able to re-login to create a new response, thus preventing any potential incidents of "false" responses. No respondent reported any issues or problems accessing the survey links or responding to the individual questions.

Finally, to ensure anonymity of all participants, respondents are identified within their response area of instructor or faculty as simply "Respondent," with a corresponding response identification number. Therefore, the sixth respondent to the instructor survey is identified as "Respondent 6," and so on.

### **Instructor Responses**

Instructors included in this section include teaching associates and part-time, adjunct faculty who taught or teach the hybrid model. Of the 22 potential respondents sent a link to the instructor survey, ten responded, providing a response rate of 45%. A majority of the survey responses were returned within the first 72 hours of the link being active. Six of the ten instructors who responded requested the opportunity to review the coded analysis. The themes noted below were sent to those six respondents for verification of findings. None of the six who asked for the themes for review purposes offered any suggestions or requests for changes.

The majority of respondents' teaching experience was in the one- to two-year range with only one having more than five years' experience (Table 4.2). For those that reported prior teaching experience, five had experience teaching Public Speaking in the traditional in-class model, two had assisted full-time faculty or guest-lectured more than once, and none had taught Public Speaking in either an online or hybrid format prior to their time at the research site.

Table 4.2

*Instructor Teaching Experience*

Years of Teaching Experience	Number of Instructor Respondents
0	3
1-2 Years	5
3-4 Years	1
5 or more years	1

Nine of the ten respondents are no longer teaching using a hybrid model (Table 4.3). The responses were varied, but fell into identifiable categories.

Table 4.3

*Instructors Still Teaching in a Hybrid Format*

Responses	Comments
1	No.
1	Teaching in other specialty area within Communication Studies
1	Yes.
2	Unemployed
2	University or Community College where currently working does not offer the option
3	No longer working in higher education

Only one of the ten respondents reported being a part of the initial two-semester hybrid pilot program prior to the department’s full transition of all sections to the hybrid platform. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from a review of the instructor responses are represented below (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

*Instructor Themes*

Instructor Responses
Classroom Community
A New Space for Connection
A Reduced Connection
Student Motivation
Pedagogy and Praxis
Redefining the Classroom
Integrating the Learning Spaces
Collaboration and Support
Collegial Support
Adequate Training
Technical Support
Uneasiness
Moving Public Speaking Online
Technical Course Management

**Classroom Community**

The concept of “community and connectedness” involved the sense of community and connectedness built—or not—within the face-to-face classroom as a result of the new model. The theme of community was reflected in answers to questions regarding the ways in which instructor relationships with students and student-to-student relationships changed. Two subthemes emerged in this category, illuminating the difference in perception between virtual and in-person community building.

**A new space for connection.** Some respondents noted positive changes with the transition to the hybrid format. One instructor wrote:

I felt that because some students felt easier to communicate online (e.g. on public forums) I got to know them better, some people are shy and they might not contribute [stet] as much in class if the same discussions are brought up but because the online component allows students to not have an embodied presence, they contribute freely and engage with the discussions in a more in depth manner. (Instructor Respondent 1)

The identity tags that accompanied each student post in the online forums mitigated the typical anonymity offered by general use of the Internet. Despite that readily available identifying information, the online portion of the class offered some students the sense of safety and encouraged them to participate more than they would in an in-class setting:

Since they communicate their thoughts [stet] in these [online] discussions and some of them provide longer paragraphs I get to know them better, in terms of their beliefs and how they think, which I believe this is not as much possible in a classroom setting where a student can get away with not contributing to the discussion. (Instructor Respondent 8)

The change in the nature of the community within the class was considered by one instructor to be simply a different way of interacting.

The relationship became intimate in a Facebook kind of way. By that I mean, face-to-face interaction was supplanted, or at the very least, predicated, by the online interactions we had. Our history was written online rather than in the

classroom. I view this as no better or worse, only different. (Instructor Respondent 2)

One last response echoed the theme of community, but in this case referred to the community among the students. One benefit of the hybrid platform was “the chat room where students can interact online with each other in response to a[n assigned] prompt. [ . . . ] The students seem engaged” (Instructor Respondent 7). While some reported positive experiences, others noted the negative impact on either their own pedagogical praxis or instructor/student relationships.

**A reduced interpersonal connection.** On the other side of the coin, most respondents felt the lack of opportunity to engage in active community-building. The importance of that connection between student and Public Speaking instructor was repeated by 80% of survey respondents. Some examples of responses include, “I felt less connected to students and I think they felt less connected to me” (Instructor Respondent 7), and “I felt further removed from them. With a partially online format, that same sense of community is more imagined than actual” (Instructor Respondent 8), and finally, “Yes there is a significant difference of personal contact. Although much of the US culture is shifting into virtual world, undergraduate students seem to value personal contact in learning” (Instructor Respondent 3). One voiced their initial expectations by stating, “I expected a big disconnect with the students” (Instructor Respondent 4). A response that was echoed by another, “I had reservations about the lack of FTF [face-to-face] time” (Instructor Respondent 5). That same respondent noted:

I felt a bit like I was more of a tool for the computer than the computer was a tool for teaching. I missed the FTF [face-to-face] with students and the

communities that were easier to build with more of it. (Instructor Respondent 5)

While the change to the hybrid model offered instructors greater access to course materials, that access came at too high a cost for one, who wrote:

I really liked having the abundance of course material always at my fingertips. It was very helpful for a new instructor. However, I never stopped disliking the loss of real face time with my students. I feel that loss was tremendous, and I do think that more in class time would have made a positive difference. (Instructor Respondent 9).

These sentiments were echoed by another, “seeing your class one day a week makes it more challenging to develop a kind of classroom esprit de corps” (Instructor Respondent 2). One respondent concluded, “I spent more time on the computer during the term than I would have spent with the students in class” (Instructor Respondent 5). Still another worried about the impact of the lack of community among the students themselves, stating, “I do think they lost something with the hybrid format - mostly a sense of connection to their classmates (Instructor Respondent 7). The lack of face-to-face contact led one instructor to note, “there isn’t as much opportunity to build community, field questions or engage the material in a way that helps everyone be on the same page. This leads to the issue of student motivation” (Instructor Respondent 8).

### **Student Motivation**

The second major theme that emerged from the data was one of student motivation. Because the weekly quizzes on the reading material were administered online, 60% of instructors reported a feeling of a greater number of students coming to class having already read the assigned chapters. One instructor reported, “one advantage

in the hybrid model was that students read the chapters in the book” (Instructor Respondent 10), a response echoed by another, “I liked the expectation that students had done the reading before class - which one could derive from the chapter tests completed before class time (rather than infer from in class discussion)” (Instructor Respondent 3).

The hybrid format facilitated classroom activity and discussion for some:

It becomes much less necessary to reiterate everything that is stated in the textbook because students have done their reading for the most part. It was also important to explain applications of the textbook concepts - since students are reading there are definitely more questions. (Instructor Respondent 7)

For others the hybrid model offered a challenge in motivating students to complete other online assignments:

In my experience, having assignments done online rather than in the classroom or as ‘regular’ homework assignments creates more space for procrastination. Though great for students that are strong self-starters, students that need more reminding or aren’t accustomed to having to check a website for updates, announcements, assignments, etc. are at a potential disadvantage. (Instructor Respondent 8)

### **Pedagogy and Praxis**

Most of the respondents noted that successfully interweaving the online portions of the class with the classroom activity had an impact on student motivation.

Respondents reported varying levels of impact of the move to the hybrid platform upon their teaching pedagogy and praxis. One wrote, “When technology is introduced it changes the pedagogy of teaching” (Instructor Respondent 1). The two themes that

emerged from this category both focused on the effective use of the classroom space; one with regard to how the space is used, and the second focusing on how to integrate the two spaces.

**Redefining the classroom.** “The notion of classroom changed,” (Instructor Respondent 2), while another likened the experience to that of a distillation process, “I had to really boil down the classroom lessons, with the assumption that the students had done their work online” (Instructor Respondent 4). Another respondent noted:

The instructor should realize that in a way there are now two classrooms, one virtual and one real. [...] In the traditional model the instructor builds everything in the classroom and has a limited time to do that, but in the hybrid model, in a way the time and the space of teaching expands and the instructor can use this advantage and build on what is going on online and use the class time wisely to focus on material that need the presence of the instructor. (Instructor Respondent 1)

Another noted the negative impact of this new space on his/her teaching:

The big difference is the amount of time I have. Though the hybrid model does force the instructor to make every minute count, I feel this is out of necessity rather than effective teaching. Sometimes class just needs to take the time to discuss things. With less time in the classroom, that is allowed ‘when available’ rather than being more open. While getting entirely off-topic can be problematic in either format, the importance of being efficient makes the hybrid class preparation made me feel like the class was more business than creating a space for learning. (Instructor Respondent 8)

**Integrating the learning spaces.** Instructors reported that the adoption of the hybrid platform required that they balance and connect the information delivered in both mediums in a more deliberate manner. One respondent noted, “since there is less classroom time, you have to get creative. You have to explore how you can benefit from aspects of the hybrid format - like online discussions and posts” (Instructor Respondent 7). Rather than using a mixed method of activity and lecture, one respondent changed from a lecture-based delivery to an activity-based methodology:

The reduced face-to-face time posed a problem [ . . . ] being that Public Speaking is such a fear-invoking subject. I dealt with it by spending most of the class time doing exercises where students had more chances to speak. This meant that they were responsible for learning content [online] and we did much applying concepts and models in class time. (Instructor Respondent 5)

Others echoed the need for weaving together the in-class and online discussions with varying degrees of success. One noted that “it is important to tie in what happened online with the classroom discussion. [...] Without these connections, the class can become disjointed” (Instructor Respondent 6), while another wrote, “the constant difference that I experienced over the course of four semesters was integrating the dialogue that occurred in the online format into the classroom” (Instructor Respondent 9). Weaving together online discussion with in-class dialogue was echoed again here:

Instructors have to work diligently to braid together the online and in-class portions of the course. Topics posted in the discussion section of the website have to also be dealt with in class. I was not successful in bringing the online together with the in-class. (Instructor Respondent 3)

## **Collaboration and Support**

The theme of “collaboration and support” that emerged fell into three sub-categories: a) collaboration with those teaching the new hybrid format, including support from colleagues within the department who had either taught in the hybrid pilot or simply supported the new effort; b) the training and support offered before and throughout the semester; and c) technical support of the virtual classroom space. The conceptual themes of “collaboration” and “support” could have been divided into two separate sections; however, the analysis of the text and responses indicated that the two were closely linked and the terms often used interchangeably by respondents.

**Collegial support.** The sense of collaborative community among the instructors who were learning and experiencing the new system was important to respondents. “Having a cohort who were all doing it together helped in that [learning process] tremendously” (Instructor Respondent 5). The group, or cohort, aspect was noted in the following response, as well as the importance of mentorship. “We were trained as a group. The training was necessary and helpful - it eased a lot of the anxiety. We were also mentored by several teachers who had already switched to the hybrid, which was also very helpful” (Instructor Respondent 7).

Support from colleagues within the department, both full-time and adjunct faculty not teaching the Public Speaking course, was “an important element” to instructors (Instructor Respondent 6). The connectedness of instructors within the department, as a member of the whole, facilitated a positive transition to the new model. “As a member of the department, I experienced much support and encouragement for the transition (both before and after)” (Instructor Respondent 5).

Other respondents echoed that sentiment, stating, “I felt we had a lot of support

from [the Course Director] and other part-timers who had already taught the course” (Instructor Respondent 7), with the strongest comment stressing the importance of “the help of a few people who were shepherding us into the hybrid model. Having a few people available to ask questions and get advice on how to proceed was crucial when I started working with the new model” (Instructor Respondent 8).

**Adequate training.** The second aspect of supportive collaboration stemmed from the pre-semester training offered to the instructors. Training sessions and support—both collegial from fellow instructors and technical—were also crucial for instructors in alleviating both technological and pedagogical concerns. “We were trained by trainers from the publisher hosting the virtual classroom space and adjunct instructors who had already taught the class in the pilot program” (Instructor Respondent 6). “We received some training which was very helpful” (Instructor Respondent 1). Survey respondents indicated the importance of the training they received on campus from colleagues who had been a part of the hybrid pilot program. The training was conducted in mixed groups; i.e. no effort was made to separate those already comfortable with technology from those who were not, providing an increased opportunity for instructors to work and learn together in the new system.

The “support of faculty and fellow teaching associates” helped in the transition to the hybrid model (Instructor Respondent 6). Others reported, “as I got into it, I leaned more on my colleagues who were in the same boat as I was” (Instructor Respondent 8); “having support and other teachers who use the new model was very important” (Instructor Respondent 10); and simply “peer support” (Instructor Respondent 9) as factors enabling them to make a smooth transition to the new teaching model.

**Technical support.** The department also made use of a “local technology expert” hired by the publisher to provide on-site support.

It was so important to have the local technology expert, so whenever people needed support in an area that was particularly difficult . . . it’s scary and unfamiliar, so I think having that support available, I think that really helped.  
(Instructor Respondent 6)

Other responses regarding the importance of technical support ranged from the thoughtful, “we all received training before the semester started and even though I’m not very good with technical matters I did not encounter any serious problems” (Instructor Respondent 1), and “supportive trainers and multiple training opportunities that were designed for my level” made the new technology easy to use (Instructor Respondent 7), to a simple emphasis on the theme, “Support, support, support” (Instructor Respondent 5).

Managing the course was easy, simple, and quick in terms of posting assignments, collecting assignments, grading assignments, and posting resources because of the initial training and ON-GOING support from our LTE [local technology expert] technician. Without the on-going, accurate, patient, and quick support from our tech, the course would have been very difficult. I was able to learn at the initial training, but I learned even more as we actually had to put it into action. (Instructor Respondent 3)

One-hundred percent of respondents noted the “low quality tech support at the publisher support desk” (Instructor Respondent 4), as well as “lots of frustration at the early bugs” (Instructor Respondent 6) as barriers to their successful experience with the

overall process of moving the course to a hybrid format. Issues with technology initially led to some resistance to, and distrust of, the new model.

### **Uneasiness**

Survey responses indicated an uneasiness that fell into two areas: a) uneasiness with the idea of moving Public Speaking instruction to a mix of online and in-class delivery; and b) uneasiness with their own ability to effectively manage with the change, either pedagogically or technologically, and still serve their students.

**Moving public speaking online.** Respondents were asked about their expectation of success and the impact the change in course delivery would have on student learning outcomes (SLOs). Responses were mixed, with the majority being no prediction of any impact on student achievement of learning objectives. Two respondents predicted lower achievement of SLOs: “My intuition said it [achievement of SLOs] might be lower than the standard model” (Instructor Respondent 2); “I thought the students definitely would not learn as much. Even if they had the same test scores, I felt they would miss out on some of the in-class learning that happens in the Basic Course” (Instructor Respondent 7).

Another wrote, “I was nervous and did not think moving to a hybrid model made sense – especially for a public speaking course” (Instructor Respondent 7). A third respondent’s initial reaction to the proposed change was “public speaking [can] not be taught using [a] hybrid model” (Instructor Respondent 2).

**Technical course management.** A second aspect of instructor unease centered on concerns of failing the students by not being prepared to deal with any technical issues that might arise. One instructor noted, “I felt uneasy. I had concerns about not being able

to manage the online portion with regards to technical matters” (Instructor Respondent 1). Another stated, “students today are perceived as ‘technology savvy,’ when they are in fact more ‘technology dependent,’ and I was concerned that I would not be able to solve their technology problems.” (Instructor Respondent 8). With regard to the increased use of, or overall adaptation to, technology, more instructors voiced their concerns about their ability to serve students above their own concerns about learning the new platform. One respondent’s anxiety stemmed from time-management concerns, “I was concerned about there being enough class time to address the material and gauge how much the students were actually learning” (Instructor Respondent 8). Time constraints were a source of anxiety for another instructor:

I was not optimistic about my ability to effectively teach public speaking once per week for only an hour and fifteen minutes. My prediction was that I would not be successful as a result of the format combined with my teaching pedagogy. (Instructor Respondent 9)

The Course Director reportedly made an effort to address instructor anxiety on both levels, meeting with instructors on a monthly basis. One respondent noted, “We talked a lot, in those meetings, to ease anxiety” (Instructor Respondent 6). The themes identified above from the instructor responses were sent to those who requested the opportunity to reflect upon them and none of the respondents offered suggestions for changes. All of those who asked for the opportunity to member-check did so and verified the identified themes.

### **Faculty Responses**

Full-time faculty who did not teach the course, considered department

stakeholders, where also surveyed using a different tool (Appendix D) and are identified in this study as faculty. The survey tool was intended to learn what department members—members *not* teaching in the hybrid format—experienced during the transition of all Public Speaking sections to a hybrid model. Among the faculty, six of nine full-time department faculty responded, providing a return rate of 67%. Table 4.5 represents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from a review of faculty response data.

Table 4.5

*Faculty Responses*

Faculty Responses
Community
Within the Classroom
Within the Department
Preconceptions of Course Quality
Expected Negative Impact on Student Outcomes
No Voice in the Decision
Participation in the Implementation
Importance of Research
Benefit of a Pilot Program
Consistent Content

**Community**

**Within the classroom.** As with the instructor responses, most faculty respondents noted concerns about the feasibility of moving half of the course content and instruction to an online medium, especially in terms of creating an effective learning space. Echoing the instructors’ concerns about how to build the necessary sense of community with a class, one faculty respondent wrote, “less time is spent with the class as the primary instructor, it is challenging to bond with and create a

community within the class. There is less time spent together as an entire group” (Faculty Respondent 3).

Lastly, one respondent noted, “I was sorry that TAs’ [teaching associates] would lose the experience of being the instructors of a great deal of content (and thus not have the opportunity to learn the material themselves.)” (Faculty Respondent 4)

**Within the department.** Another aspect of community that emerged referred to a greater level of discussion of the Basic Course in general.

Well, the only thing I can say about that is that in my years before [the hybrid transition], frankly I had rarely heard the faculty talk about the public speaking class, other than if you were the course director. It was not a curricular issue, it was kind of a ‘gimme.’ After we did this [transition], [the Basic Course] became a topic of conversation. It didn’t stay that way for a long time, and it wasn’t deep, but we actually did talk about the public speaking class in ways that we hadn’t talked about it before. (Faculty Respondent 6)

### **Preconceptions of Course Quality**

The initial responses to the proposal to transition Public Speaking to the hybrid platform ranged from, “Who’s behind this? What’s behind it; [...] So [we] had questions of ‘why are we doing this?;’ ‘What are the benefits of it?;’ ‘Why would anyone do public speaking online?’ (Faculty Respondent 6), to this:

This is going to be a hot mess. There are so many potential problems with going hybrid (50 in class, 50 online): technology problems, students not keeping up with the course since it takes discipline to keep up with an online course and how can you teach public speaking effectively when you cannot respond to the

students right away as you can with a face-to-face class. There is already so much that cannot be covered in a 15 week course. (Faculty Respondent 3)

Others expressed a more open mind about the possibility of the new format; one faculty member noted:

I was willing to give it a chance but am a little cautious on moving this particular class to an online format. I think there are other communication courses that are better suited to the online format (hybrid or 100% online) than Public Speaking. (Faculty Respondent 3)

Another wrote, “I was really unsure about the process. I wasn’t involved in the [decision to move to the hybrid model], so I didn’t know how it would operate” (Faculty Respondent 5). Adding to the concerns of pedagogy was an uncertainty about just how what and how much of the course content would be delivered online. One respondent stated that the online component was “okay as a support but shouldn’t replace” class time (Faculty Respondent 2). Another echoed this feeling:

If you were talking about something a little more obvious, like Comm[unication] and Technology, you wouldn’t have as much resistance as you did with that [Public Speaking] class. Other people might have a similar level [of resistance] but for different reasons. For instance, teaching Intercultural [Communication] online. But I think it was partly what feels like a real contradiction of goal and method when you say ‘let’s teach public speaking online.’ And I think part of that was because it was so new and people hadn’t thought through how that could work. (Faculty Respondent 6)

Finally, some preconceptions stemmed from a basic understanding of

terminology. One respondent wrote, “My understanding, at the time, of the word hybrid meant a survey of course content. But, when it was made clear that course was part online and part in-class, I had no idea how we would make it work” (Faculty Respondent 1).

**Expected negative impact on student outcomes.** Current research at the time seemed to support some faculty assumptions that the hybrid course would bring lower student performance scores. One respondent noted, “research at the time was not very supportive of this being successful (Faculty Respondent 3). Another echoed this response, stating, “Initially I felt that face-to-face was a better way to present the material and I felt that students would not intensely understand the components of public speaking” (Faculty Respondent 1). Another stated:

I do remember charges being made about how the course could negatively impact student performance, but no evidence was given to support the claim.

As a matter of fact, I was the assessment liaison at the time and I made sure that I would gather data on that course as well as the face-to-face courses because I thought my position would be supported. Data showed no significant difference. (Faculty Respondent 1)

Another responded that there was, in fact, a difference in outcomes between the two modes of delivery, and that became apparent during the two-semester pilot program:

The research sort of showed there'd be a high level of attrition. That students wouldn't learn as much, so an assessment of their learning would decrease.

What we found was that they actually did better both in terms of doing well on tests and over the long semester they did better on speeches. There was a steeper learning curve at the beginning, so in the more traditional format you could see

more steady progress earlier, by the middle of the semester the online/hybrid students were doing as well, and by the end of the semester, doing better [than the students enrolled in the traditional format course]. (Faculty Respondent 6)

### **No Voice in the Decision**

All of the respondents in this study reported having no input or voice in the decision to transition the Public Speaking course to a hybrid format and others the opposite. One faculty member stated, with regard to any communication from the Chair seeking comment or input on the proposed change, “[There was] none—in fact, I was not made aware of any such communication” (Faculty Respondent 2). Another noted, “We didn’t agree [to transition the Basic Course in Public speaking to a hybrid model] . . . a decision had been made that it was going to happen” (Faculty Respondent 3).

A similar response was, “I think what didn’t work was really the set-up of really, ‘we have to do this,’ it was imposed [...] it’s hard to get buy-in when you’re told to do something” (Faculty Respondent 6). That same respondent noted:

There was a [redacted] mandate and a [redacted] report, which is where the funding came from to do this. [...] In a certain way it [the decision to go to the hybrid model] was imposed by the chair, leading to discussions of why we didn’t want to do it and what would be the negative impact and why it wasn’t a good idea, but there was a point at which it was clear that it was gonna be done. (Faculty Respondent 6)

One faculty member wrote that s/he had “very little input [in the decision]. The Chair started with a proposal for a pilot because there was money available and we had no courses online in our department. [...] I think we all had reservations” (Faculty

Respondent 1). This response was repeated throughout the faculty responses, including, “It was presented by the Chair and it got passed down. It was discussed as a pilot, but then it moved permanently to the hybrid format” (Faculty Respondent 4); and another, “[I had] no input. It was nice to see two test sections launched first with a part timer and to hear what challenges the students faced and where they had questions or concerns.” (Faculty Respondent 3).

**Participation in the implementation.** A thematic subset of having a voice emerged, that of being a part of the process to implement the ordered change. Despite the lack of input in the decision to enact the transition, once it became clear that the transition to the hybrid platform was going to take place, the Course Director made an effort to include faculty in the selection of textbook and publisher. Organizers “made the process as transparent as possible” (Faculty Respondent 6). That effort was reflected in faculty responses.

We looked at different textbooks. [We were all asked for] feedback in that process. [We were told], ‘you know, we’re going to have these presentations by different publishers’ and [we] were invited to come. Some people did come. So I feel that to the extent that it was reasonable, there was a lot of invitation to participate and then no real concern if people didn’t, but [we] had the opportunity to come and to give input. (Faculty Respondent 6)

Another echoed that response, “I went to all of the presentations by the publishers and was a part of the meeting where the TAs gave their opinion on which book to use. I feel as though my opinion counted and was taken into consideration” (Faculty Respondent 4).

While not all faculty participated in the review process for the publisher who

would provide the textbook and online space for the virtual component, some did.

“Estimating that at the time we had between 10-15 faculty members [...] I would say 20-30%” attended publisher presentations (Faculty Respondent 6).

Achieving buy-in and/or acceptance of the change from faculty was, as noted above, a difficult proposition because of the way in which the decision to change happened. Because the decision had already been made, a greater effort was needed to involve faculty in the process as a whole and to overcome objections. Aside from invitations to participate in presentations with the publishers and give opinion on textbook adoption, other efforts to achieve faculty cooperation included frequent reports during monthly department meetings. In an effort to get buy-in, the Course Director tried to make it as inclusive as possible. [They] did everything [they] could to get buy-in” (Faculty Respondent 5). That effort included directed attention to interpersonal relationships.

I think the talking about it, and giving reports in faculty meetings was important, feedback, asking people to ask questions. The Director talked to people individually outside of the meetings. And it wasn't so much advocating more, but explaining what [they] were doing, what [they] had found in the research.

[...]

So I think that telling people about that [research] and discussing it on an interpersonal basis helped move it forward. (Faculty Respondent 6)

### **Importance of Research**

The research process lasted for one-half of the academic year, and included an analysis of studies and anecdotal evidence from other institutions. “Research,” noted one

faculty member, “helped facilitate goodwill” toward the new model (Faculty Respondent 1). Another respondent stated that they felt thus:

If we’re going do it we might as well do it in a creative, interesting way that tries to build on the strengths of each of the two formats. [...] Finding out what other people were doing helped. So, when [we heard], ‘wow, look at what they’re doing here,’ and ‘this is what this and this and this . . . they’re saying [...] I think that telling people about that [research] and discussing in on an interpersonal basis helped moved [the transition] forward. (Faculty Respondent 6)

The process of transitioning the Basic Course to a hybrid program was not a quick one. The final department proposal for the incremental transition to the hybrid program was submitted in October, 2006 by the department for approval from the Dean’s office. The year of research was followed by a summer of curriculum development, a time that also included the evaluation of textbooks and publisher sites. “Research was really important and added a lot to what we wanted to do” (Faculty Respondent 6).

The department made the decision to host the virtual classroom space offsite with the publisher that was eventually chosen because, based upon what the research showed, the campus, due to the push to move courses to online or hybrid spaces, did not have the infrastructure to support the volume of traffic the transition would require. After compiling the research and comparing the findings against the goals of the program, a plan was set in motion to transition the Basic Course to the hybrid format in stages (Faculty Respondent 6). There was little variation in the time frame from the initial proposed timetable (Table 3.1) to the final implementation schedule (Table 3.2).

**Benefit of a pilot program.** Sixty-six percent of faculty respondents noted an appreciation for the hybrid pilot program in allaying their fears. Faculty also stated that the pilot program helped them to overcome objections and support the new model.

I think it was viewed as a really good idea to try it to see if it worked, so I think it helped in that it helped people sort of see that we weren't just jumping in. I think by then we had backed up a little bit [from the original proposal]. [The department decided to] do a pilot to find out what worked and didn't work. So I think that that helped in the acceptance of [the transition of the course to the hybrid model]. (Faculty Respondent 6)

Throughout the pilot program, monthly meetings were held with instructors to iron out technical and pedagogical issues. Those meetings were considered critical to the success of the overall transition. "The idea of meetings helps. That's really helpful in the transition. It [the hybrid program] would not have been as successful had we not had that monthly meeting to discuss challenges, things that worked, things that didn't" (Faculty Respondent 6).

Others echoed the importance of the test platform to understanding how it would all come together. "I worried about the usability of the interface, how easily the students and faculty could learn it and navigate it, [...] so I checked out the [pilot] site and gave feedback to the Course Director" (Faculty Respondent 5). "The pilot program helped a lot. It gave use the necessary resources to pull the course together. Without it, I think we would be teaching this course in the traditional format" (Faculty Respondent 2). Another respondent wrote, "the systematic way that we did [the transition], over a long period of time . . . having the research, the pilot, the transition. [...] I think that

really helped” (Faculty Respondent 6).

### **Consistent Content**

One hundred percent of respondents to the faculty survey stated at some point in their responses that the hybrid model of course design offers a greater opportunity to present consistent course content across all sections of the course. “I suspect students are getting more consistent common content. [...] I appreciate the efficiency of the hybrid model and the likelihood students will get exposed to a common content” (Faculty Respondent 4) wrote one, while another added they felt outcomes would be improved by the standardization of “course content and delivery” (Faculty Respondent 2).

**Integrating the learning spaces.** A sub-theme regarding content emerged with regard to linking online course content with in-class lessons. The online portion of the class featured a Video Library that offered the opportunity for instructors to use lectures given by faculty to support the lessons of the textbook. “By using multiple faculty members to deliver the recorded lectures as a part of the course, it does expose students to different delivery styles” (Faculty Respondent 3). “It [the Video Library] enabled us to expose [students] to experts on the subject matter” (Faculty Respondent 4). “Instructors need to ask themselves, ‘what can you do online that actually augments and what can you do in class that augments, and how are the two connected? That’s a tough curricular decision, how to connect those two” (Faculty Respondent 6).

### **Summary of Findings**

The data show some similarities in theme with regard to community-building and concerns for how the change in course delivery would impact students with regard to thoroughly absorbing and understanding the course material. Both instructors and faculty

reported concerns with technology and its usability. The dominant theme among instructors was the need for, and availability of, support, both technical and collegial. Instructors stated that collaboration with colleagues and the support of those who taught the hybrid pilot were critical in their own successful adaptation to the new platform. The dominant theme among faculty respondents was the benefit of consistent common content offered by the hybrid platform.

After the initial decision to implement the hybrid program was given to the department stakeholders, faculty responsible for that implementation worked to keep the lines of communication open by reporting back frequently on the progress of ongoing research, the pilot study, and following the transition of all sections to the new model.

Chapter Five of this study will provide a summary of this research project, a discussion of how the identified themes fit within existing research, and future recommendations for research on this topic.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### **Summary of Study**

This study was intended to explore the lived experience of department members who transitioned from the traditional in-class model of teaching Public Speaking to a hybrid model, with 50% of the course content delivered online and 50% in the classroom. Because the department chair mandated from above the change in course delivery, the results of this study were viewed through the lens of organizational change. The question of the lived experience made a qualitative study based upon the phenomenological research methodology a logical choice. The four research questions of this study and researcher findings will be discussed below.

Data for this study were collected using two online surveys and one individual interview with the basic Public Speaking Course Director. The chair who initiated the change to the hybrid model has left the research site and was unavailable for interview and did not respond to requests for information for this study; therefore, the Course Director at the time of the transition to the hybrid model was interviewed to provide historical context and perspective on the impetus and process of the change in delivery model.

### **Discussion**

The identified themes found within the results provide a framework through which to understand the experiences of instructors and faculty during the transition of the Public Speaking course to a hybrid model, and the impact of that change on the department as a whole. To that end, the practical implications of the discussion is divided into six categories that highlight key findings. Those categories are: Building community in the hybrid program; faculty and instructor collaboration; pre-

implementation research and pilot; local, ongoing, knowledgeable support; open communication at all levels; and open decision-making process to achieve buy-in.

### **Building Community in the Hybrid Classroom**

To understand the importance of community in a Public Speaking class, some context must be given. Public Speaking is a course that is required for graduation and is most often put off until the last semester of college because of a fear or anxiety about speaking before an audience (Mandeville, 1993). A classroom, a space that can be considered small, organizational network, is an important part of the process of easing student anxiety (Hanson & Teven, 2004; Lebrun et al., 2009), and Littlejohn (2001) noted that the basic idea of network theory is connectedness. “The basic unit of organization,” he wrote, “is the link between two persons [...] the interconnectedness between people” (p. 282). Studies have shown the importance of creating social networks to reduce participant fear when building a technology-user community (Jenkins, 1992; West, 1999; Dick, 2005; Britten & Craig, 2006; Moulton, 2008).

To reduce public speaking anxiety, instructors emphasize the safety and non-judgmental aspect of the classroom space (Mandeville, 1993; Comeaux & Neer, 1995; Clark & Jones, 2001; Hanson & Teven, 2004; Lebrun et al., 2009). Therefore, instructors of Public Speaking strive to make their classroom a supportive space in which students can build a strong social network among their peers. Moving Public Speaking to a hybrid platform, essentially removing 50% of that “safe space” and putting it online, can impact community-building, or perceived interconnectedness, within the classroom. It is that interconnectedness of the classroom network that Public Speaking instructors rely on to build community. Barnes (2003) noted that when the physical characteristics and

nonverbal cues are eliminated, “people encounter each other only through the words they exchange” (p. 273). Barnes further notes that online anonymity—or, in this case, perceived anonymity—can encourage speech that might otherwise be stifled.

Ong (1982) wrote, “spoken words are always modifications of a total situation which is more than verbal. They never occur alone, in a context of simply words” (p. 101). It is in textual communication that Ong notes that we move to a secondary orality, eliminating the extratextual cues important to effective communication. On the opposite side of the coin, however, Ong, and later Jenkins (1992), found that the secondary orality of computer-mediated communication supports the formation of groups by forcing the consumers of the computer-mediated communication to become producers as well. In that production of new responses, members of online communities will bond (Jenkins, 1992).

Because the hybrid course extends so much of the coursework and member interaction into the online space, some understanding of virtual community formation and its impact upon group and interpersonal communication is important. Rheingold (1993) defined virtual communities as a place in which people develop “webs of personal relationships in cyberspace” (p. xx). Rheingold later expanded upon his definition, stating that virtual communities consist of

[...] a group of people who may or may not meet on another face to face, and who exchange words and ideas through the mediation of computer bulletin boards, and networks. When these exchanges begin to involve interwoven friendships and rivalries and give rise to the real-life marriages, births, and deaths that bond people in any other kind of community, they begin to affect

these people's lives in the real world. (Rheingold, 1998, p. 116)

Phillips (1996) extended the definition of the relationships formed in online communities when he stated,

Community [...] is not a geographic notion but a symbolic one. Community is created and maintained by people in interaction. It is a process of creating communal ties through which individuality is construction, interpreted, and contained. It is a relational concept. (Phillips, 1996, p. 40)

Three themes emerged in this area: community; pedagogy; and consistency and motivation. All three themes are closely linked with the concept of community discussed above.

**Community.** The term “community” in both the faculty and instructor responses was used to describe both the feeling of connectedness to other instructors or faculty involved in the process of change, and also with regard to the classroom space.

Both faculty and instructor respondents to this study voiced the fear that limiting in-person classroom time would limit the social connectedness reflecting the loss of the primary orality of the instructor speaking directly to students, and thus the sense of community. The data, however, confirm Ong's (1982), Jenkins' (1992), and Barnes' (2003) research; that while there was, in fact, limited in-person time, some respondents reported that the online aspect allowed a student normally more reserved in the classroom to engage more and to forge those social links in the online space, both with the instructor and amongst themselves. Barnes (2003) wrote that communicators make up for the lack of contextual cues in three ways: 1) linguistically, through the use of slang, lowercase or all capital letters, and grammar; 2) symbolic alterations such as substituting “CUL8R” for

“see you later; and 3) by adding extra punctuation or letters to emphasize a point, i.e., “YESSSSSS!!!!”

Respondents to the surveys, both full-time faculty department members and the hybrid instructors, used the contextual cues within the virtual community noted by Barnes (2003), though in differing ways. The terms “FTF” and “F2F” were used interchangeably by Instructors to mean “face-to-face,” (Instructor Respondent 3; Instructor Respondent 5; Instructor Respondent 6; Instructor Respondent 7). However, the full-time faculty respondents, when they used it, spelled out the term “face-to-face” (Faculty Respondent 4; Faculty Respondent 6) and instead used other contextual cues such as asterisks or capitalizing entire words to emphasize a point. Another contextual cue found in the Instructor responses was the use of capitalization or word repetition to emphasize a point: “ON-GOING support [...],” (Instructor Respondent 3); “MORE contact [...],” (Instructor Respondent 4); and “support, support, support,” (Instructor Respondent 5).

**Pedagogy.** Kozma (1994) wrote that “traditional models” of course design do not reflect “complex interrelationships among media, method, and situation” (p. 17). Kozma suggests that it may be time for instructors to reframe our ideas of course design along with our ideas of how we use technology. Lebrun, Docq, and Smidts (2009) note that instructors’ “pedagogical efforts do seem to generate better perceptions of their learning among students, and this perception can stimulate and facilitate learning” (p. 35). This finding supports the need to build and use pedagogical techniques in the classroom space that address the learning styles not targeted in the online space; kinesthetic and auditory learners will benefit from a more dynamic and active lesson in the classroom that

supports what has been addressed online.

Respondents indicated that it is critical to successfully meet the demands of the new model that instructors realize that the two classroom spaces are vastly different. What takes place and works within the in-person session will not work in the online space, and vice-versa. Additionally, *how* instructors made use of both spaces was key to their ability to model and support effective Public Speaking, findings supported by Atwel (1992), Barr and Tagg (1995), Comeaux and Neer (1995), Hanson and Teven (2004), Benoit and Benoit (2006), Fortune, Shifflett and Sibley (2006), and Lebrun, Docq, and Smidts (2009). Both instructors and faculty stated that how the online space was used could—and did—either enhance or detract from the overall impact of the course. Key to instructors' ability to effectively plan and execute pedagogically effective learning spaces was the collaboration and support, both emotional and technical, that was available on campus and off, data that confirms Moulton's (2008) findings and recommendations.

**Consistency and motivation.** Instructors stated that students came to class better prepared to answer and discuss questions related to the material covered in the online portion of the course. This enabled instructors to make the in-classroom time a more interactive and engaged space for learning. The ready availability of a wide range of electronic course material was another factor in making the change a positive experience for instructors, while enhancing faculty expectations with the idea of consistent course content.

Students, too, are motivated when they do not feel as if their comments and input disappear into a vacuum (Seaberry, 2008). The data show that instructors felt a greater

degree of satisfaction with the process when they were successful at integrating the online experience with the in-class. This leads us to a discussion of Pedagogy and Praxis.

### **Instructor/Faculty Collaboration**

Instructor and faculty responses produced two clear themes: connectedness; and collaboration. The terms connectedness and community were often used interchangeably; however, for the purposes of this category, connectedness refers to the interpersonal relationships between instructors and faculty in the department, whereas community refers to the interpersonal relationships built over the course of the semester.

**Connectedness.** Instructors reported a positive experience with regard to the collegiality of the process; undergoing training in the new system as a cohort and the ability to compare and share ideas and expertise within the community of instructors and with others who taught in the pilot program. Additionally, faculty respondents reported that while the proposal to transition to the new model opened a dialogue on the Basic Course itself, the “imposed” decision left no room for discussion or elaboration.

**Collaboration.** Britten and Craig (2006) emphasized the importance of faculty being able to see what other faculty were building in their courses as a means for feeling successful in their own course construction. The instructor respondents in the present study echoed their findings. Kezar (2005c) found that hybrid teaching suggests a higher degree of collaboration than is perhaps seen in traditional course design, and collaboration can be a key factor in achieving success for a new endeavor. Kezar also wrote:

The importance of relationships and networks may be a distinctive feature of higher education collaborations. Because higher education institutions are

professional organizations where individuals are greatly influenced and persuaded by peers and rewards are less important than prestige, this may account for why networks and relationships are a key lever. (Kezar, 2005c, p. 857)

All of the instructor respondents noted the importance of being able to relate to and discuss with their peers any issues they had with either the platform or simply managing the course content. The training sessions required of instructors provided a foundation upon which to build a knowledge base that was created with the launch of the pilot and continues to grow today. Mitchell (2009) found that “an unanticipated effect of training was a shift toward more student-centered teaching both in the physical and virtual settings” (p. 13). Training as a group can offer the collaborative atmosphere noted by Kezar (2005c). Additionally, the Course Director hosted monthly meetings that supported and encouraged that information exchange to the point where nearly every respondent emphasized the need for that ongoing connectedness. The meetings addressed pedagogical as well as technical issues. Data show that collaboration among peers and colleagues was instrumental in facilitating a successful transition for instructors, findings that are similar to Moulton (2008) and Osika, Johnson, and Butau’s (2009) findings.

### **Pre-Implementation Research and Pilot Program**

Four sub-categories fall under this heading: research; benefit of a pilot program; learning outcomes; and uneasiness. The four subcategories emerged from the quantity and quality of the research performed by members of the department in an effort to ease the transition process.

**Research.** A review of the literature discussed in Chapter Two of this study offers a sampling of the variety of literature available on the topic of teaching Public Speaking online. Respondents to this study expressed the value of reviewing and understanding that literature and using it to build a base upon which to build the hybrid model. Benoit and Benoit (2006), emphasized the importance of pre-implementation research, as did Levasseur, Dean and Pfaff (2004), Nicosia (2005), Lebrun, Docq, and Smidts (2009), and others. Hanson and Teven's (2004) experience with their top-down imposed change to a hybrid Public Speaking platform offered lessons for the department in this study.

**Benefit of a pilot program.** Some responses indicated that the pilot was beneficial simply in terms of giving them time to adjust to the idea that change was coming while others, faculty and instructor alike, were more interested in what the pilot showed in terms of student outcomes. Levy (2003) argued that a pilot program allows for adequate planning, and that "planning should allow for adequate budgeting for staff, technology, student services, and training for all of the areas of ODL in meeting the needs of the institution" (p. 10). Additionally, instructors specifically stated that having those who had taught the pilot program available as a resource from whom to draw information and expertise was invaluable to their own transition.

The pilot also offered the opportunity for developers to adjust the platform and delivery model in stages. After each semester the Course Director would include in the monthly meeting a final breakdown of what worked and what did not, and solicit suggestions for improvement and change from the growing cadre of instructors introduced to the new system. Both instructors and faculty reported the importance of the pilot program in terms of easing concerns about pedagogy and/or technology, as well as

refuting the research on the impact of a hybrid delivery model on student learning outcomes.

**Learning outcomes.** Though this study did not address differences in student learning outcomes, both instructors and faculty noted that while they had preconceptions of significant differences in student performance and grades, those concerns were not borne out in the end of semester assessments. Faculty respondents voiced a greater degree of expectation of lower outcomes than did instructor respondents. Anecdotal data in this study support Clark and Jones' (2001) side-by-side comparison of online and in-class models of Public Speaking courses. Clark found that "by the end of the term, the outcomes of the two types of sections were nearly identical" (p. 123). Respondents noted that because of the way in which chapter quizzing was designed, students came to class better prepared to ask questions and to participate in discussions. Hanson and Teven (2004) also found that students who enrolled in the hybrid version of their Public Speaking class performed at the same level or better than those enrolled in the traditional in-class model.

**Uneasiness.** Schein (1984) found that well-planned professional development makes it possible for faculty to test the system and reduce any anxiety they may have with the new process. Rogers (2000) later noted that for successful adoption of technology, a paradigm shift needs to occur for faculty. To facilitate this paradigm shift, Rogers argued that "faculty and their institutions [must] reconfigure teaching and learning activities to take full advantage of new technology" (p. 21).

Rogers (2000) noted in her study of faculty resistance to distance learning that faculty were concerned about two major issues: Would lack of faculty expertise in

technology impact student outcomes?; and Would an online course delivery system also impact student outcomes? Both aspects of instructor unease identified in this study mirror Rogers' findings. Data in this study support Rogers' (2000) results; most instructors feared that they in some way would fail the students because they, themselves, were not comfortable with the technology. Those fears were alleviated by both the ongoing technical support available and the open communication that occurred within the cohort of instructors. Additionally, the ready availability of the in-house local faculty expert eased instructor concerns about technological issues as they arose. With regard to the full-time faculty stakeholders, their unease with the new system of course delivery is discussed in the section below.

### **Local, Ongoing, Knowledgeable Support**

The category of support fell into two sub-categories: collegial, and local technical support. Both sub-categories were identified by instructors and faculty as important to their acceptance of and transition to the new model.

**Collegial support.** Moulton (2008) found that training must include positive reinforcement and provide immediate, one-on-one as well as on-going support. Britton and Craig (2006) stated that faculty new to technology, or any new software, often become frustrated and give up when they become stuck and have no one to assist them. Britton and Craig also note that training should be taught in an applied setting so that faculty can practice their own activities and leave after having accomplished tangible results. Instructors reported that the training provided was delivered in the right amount to provide the necessary knowledge, and that having that training as a cohort added to the experience.

While the technology was designed for ease of use, problems did arise. Osika, Johnson, and Buteau (2009) found that problems with technology are a factor in successful faculty adoption of new technology in course design or delivery. Part of the experience of redesigning course material for partially online delivery is of having to learn new technology to deliver that new course material in an unfamiliar model. Responses supported prior studies that suggest the importance of quality faculty development courses and adequate technical support are critical to a positive adoption of new methods of course delivery (Benoit & Benoit, 2006; Panda & Mishra, 2007; Levin & Wadmany, 2008; Seaberry, 2008; Zhen et al., 2008; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Lebrun et al., 2009; Gilman, 2010).

Unanimously the biggest barrier faculty feared and that instructors reported was the lack of quality off-site technical support. Additionally, some instructors and faculty stated that their own preconceptions of potential problems first hindered their adaptation to, or acceptance of, the new model.

**Local technical support.** Data show that the extra step of providing a local faculty expert in the software and online platform went a long way to easing anxiety and resolving localized technology issues with either the course management software or the user interface. Both faculty and instructors emphasized the importance of that local support agent as key to facilitating a successful change to the hybrid model.

### **Open Communication and Decision Making**

This study was designed to elicit responses that indicated the response of the department to an imposed change in course delivery. The responses to the surveys show that participation in the process had some impact on both faculty and instructor

preconceived notions of the overall idea of the transition as well as on student outcomes.

**Preconceptions.** Any discussion of the instructors' experience in teaching the new model or faculty's experience in the transition process must include any preconceptions either body might have toward the move to a hybrid format with regard to pedagogy. Sixty-seven percent of faculty versus 30% of instructors stated having preconceptions of the negative impact of the transition to the hybrid format in terms of course rigor, outcomes, or technological issues. Osika, Johnson, and Buteau (2009) found in their study that 53% of surveyed faculty felt that online courses did not have the same quality and rigor as did traditional in-class models. Similar studies have found that faculty preconceptions of online course delivery can have an impact on model adoption (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Carr, 2000; Clark & Jones, 2001; Hanson & Teven, 2004; Benoit & Benoit, 2006; Panda & Mishra, 2007; Levin & Wadmany, 2008; Seaberry, 2008; Gilman, 2010).

One aspect of instructor resistance is their own expectation of failure, either for themselves or their students (Levin & Wadmany, 2008; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008). Expectancy-value theory tells us that attitudes toward a project or object come from one's beliefs (Fishbein, 1967). Fishbein argued that attitudes are "correlated with beliefs and lead you to behave a certain way" (p. 124). Therefore, expectancy-value theory suggests that a positive attitude toward something, in this instance a new model of teaching a course, will come from other attitudes—about technology, pedagogy, effective teaching models. Thus a positive, neutral, or negative attitude about a change in delivery might result in a prediction of student learning outcomes that mirrors an instructor or faculty members' belief in other areas. Wolcott (1999) and Weston (2005) offer suggestions for

facilitating the necessary positive attitude to facilitate faculty involvement, as does Moulton (2008), noted above.

**Participation in decision making process.** Eckel, Hill and Green (1998) define transformational change as: “Transformation that (1) alters the culture of the institution by changing select underlying assumptions and institutional behaviors, processes, and products; (2) is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution; (3) is intentional; and (4) occurs over time” (p. 3). Eckel, et al, go on to state that “key stakeholders must have input into the change process and believe that their contributions are valued” for transformational change to occur (p. 9).

Instructor and faculty preconceptions of the transition to a new model were also influenced by their own voice in the process. Carr (2000) addressed the feeling of disenfranchisement when examining faculty resistance to distant education changes. The primary area of complaint among faculty, Carr found, was not the move to the use of technology but the lack of consultation about, and ability to plan for, the change as a whole. Schein (2004) noted that it is critical to achieve buy-in from those who must implement change. Echoing Schein’s research, Mitchell (2009) wrote, “faculty members, staff members, and administrators involved in online education must be part of the process of its institutionalization, and they should establish guidelines and procedures together” (p. 13).

As noted earlier, Kezar (2005a) found that radical change could result in lowered morale and lack of commitment to the process or project. Shults’ (2008) emphasis on understanding and valuing the importance of the human element within the department and including their voice in the change echoes Schein’s (2004) and Mitchell’s (2009)

findings.

Despite frequent reports to department stakeholders, faculty within this study reported little to no communication that facilitated their acceptance of the change in course delivery, save for the report of the results of the pilot program. A greater degree of communication from the Chair who initiated the program might have served to alleviate some of the concerns faculty voiced, potentially easing their concerns.

### **Implications of Study**

Research was an important part of the process of the change to the new model at this institution and this study was designed to add to that body of knowledge. Data from this study supports benefit of a pilot program before initiating any significant change in course delivery. Additionally, a cohort-style or collaborative/peer mentoring faculty development program will make the adoption of a technologically based initiative smoother for those tasked with teaching the new model. Open communication between department members is important, as is the need for the department Chair or Course Director to actively ask for and integrate suggestions from department constituents to facilitate a sense of ownership of the endeavor. Covone (2011), Mitchell (2009), Kezar (2005b), and Schein (1984) all emphasize the importance of faculty buy-in when adapting to or adopting online or hybrid education models. The buy-in is most often accomplished by involving faculty in the decision-making process.

Another critical aspect in the adoption of a new, technologically based mode of delivery is the need for ongoing, knowledgeable, and competent technical support. Having this support available in-house for instructors provided a technical and psychological service that many felt made the transition possible.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study explored the lived experience of department members transitioning a core course away from a traditional in-class only to a hybrid model, with 50% of the course content delivered online. The participants noted that research and an incremental pilot program was critical to the success of the venture. Further research might examine whether a pilot is necessary for the transition of all courses to an online or hybrid format, or just those whose course work requires a great deal of one-on-one communication and community-building. Another avenue of research might compare which elements of the Basic Course are presented online and which during the in-class sessions. In the same vein, an extension of this study might examine specific student learning outcomes and student achievement levels compared to those elements taught online and in the classroom.

Questions of virtual presence and virtual identity can and should be explored. If, as Goffman (1959) argues, the way in which individuals express themselves involves both the impression they *give*—verbal symbols to convey information—and the impression they *give off*—the manner in which those symbols are delivered, how then is a student’s presentation of self portrayed in a class where one-half of their interaction is online. Conversely, McLuhan (1967) argues that “the medium *is* the message;” therefore what message is presented in a Public Speaking class when half of its content is delivered via electronic medium. Future research can explore the dynamic landscape that is speaking in the new public fora of Twitter, Facebook, and so many online mediums of communication.

Another aspect for consideration in future research is the possibility of implementing this same course delivery model at the community college level.

Respondents noted the importance of the monthly meetings as critical to their exchange of ideas for and knowledge of the new platform. Will this model be as effective in a mostly-adjunct environment where instructors are rarely on campus at the same time, and indeed whose only interaction with one another is via email? Would the virtual “instructor’s lounge” that was available but not used by respondents to this study be sufficient to replace the monthly in-person meetings many felt were so critical to the success of the transition?

A third area for future research might focus on the implications of presenting Public Speaking in an online or hybrid format through the combined lenses of Searle’s (1970) Speech Act Theory and Short, Williams, and Christie’s (1976) Social Presence Theory. Both theories examine the speech act and performance as a multi-part process. While Short et al.’s research was presented long before the prevalence of computer-mediated communication; their findings continue to influence researchers in that arena today.

### **Concluding Statement**

We have, as Ong (1980) noted, indeed moved from a primary to a secondary orality, in which it is commonplace for knowledge to be gained a-synchronously from the facilitator of that knowledge. So, too, have we changed the manner in which we communicate that orality that it has also become commonplace to consider mediated communication to be a viable and legitimate alternative to face-to-face exchanges. The hybrid model of offering Public Speaking is an effective tool if managed well, and if those undertaking the process understand the significance of a statement from an instructor respondent to this study; “students today are perceived as ‘technology savvy,’

when they are in fact more ‘technology dependent’” (Instructor Respondent 8). A small but important distinction to factor into building any online or hybrid course content. Some instructors are well suited to the new mode of delivery, and are able to easily incorporate the online discussion and information into the in-class setting. This research adds to the existing body of knowledge encompassing teaching online, and offers a perspective on how a department can successfully integrate the online component into an essentially performance-based curriculum.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Pilot Study Questions

1. What pedagogical differences have you discovered between the hybrid and the in-class models?
  - a. Is there a difference in the pedagogy of teaching in the hybrid model versus the traditional model? How have you dealt with those differences, if any?
2. Can you speak to the effectiveness of both models?
  - a. How do you now feel about the department-wide transition to the hybrid model?
3. Teaching Public Speaking revolves around feedback from students as you introduce and model Public Speaking. How do you address the ‘feedback component’ of teaching Public Speaking in the hybrid model?
  - a. Please describe your satisfaction with your experiences as a hybrid instructor.
4. How does the changed format from in-class to hybrid impact course content and outcomes?
5. Technological implications aside, how do you prepare different course content for the hybrid model than for the in-class model?
6. If you prepare different course content, why?
7. How do you feel about the comment, “It’s the content, not the delivery.”
8. What, if any, changes have you seen in SLO outcomes with the hybrid model compared to the in-class model?
9. If you have seen changes, how do you feel about those changes?

## **Appendix B**

### **Survey Questions for Hybrid Teaching Faculty**

1. What were your initial preconceptions/expectations of process of moving the Basic Course to a hybrid model?
2. Did you have a prediction of student learning outcomes in the hybrid platform? If so, what were they?
3. What was the actual learning process like for you, with regard to managing your course in a hybrid setting? Did you require additional training?
4. Is there a difference in the pedagogy of teaching in the hybrid model versus the traditional model? How have you dealt with those differences, if any?
5. What did you like about transitioning the course to the hybrid format?
6. What did you dislike about the transition to the hybrid format?
7. What (if any) pedagogical/andragogical differences have you discovered between the hybrid and the in-class models?
8. How do you perceive the changed format from in-class to hybrid impacted course content and outcomes?
9. Technological implications aside, do (or have) you prepare different course content for the hybrid model than for the in-class model?
10. In what way was your relationship with students changed?
11. Describe your experience as a member of the department as the department transitioned the basic Public Speaking course to the hybrid model.
12. Teaching Public Speaking revolves around feedback from students as you introduce and model Public Speaking. How do you address the 'feedback component' of teaching Public Speaking in the hybrid model?
13. What helped you transition to the new model?

14. What were the barriers that you experienced in the transition?
15. Were you involved in the one-year pilot study of the transition?
16. Are you now teaching Public Speaking in a hybrid model? If not, why not?
17. How long had you been teaching before teaching this course?
18. If you would like to receive a summary of the themes that emerge from analysis of all survey respondents, please enter your email address. Your name and/or contact information will remain confidential.

## Appendix C

### Letter of Introduction

December 28, 2011

Dear [name of respondent]:

I am a doctoral student working under the direction of Professor Diane Gehart in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Doctoral Program at California State University Northridge. I am conducting a research study of the Communication Studies Department's transition of the Basic Course in Public Speaking to a hybrid model. I obtained your name and address from the Basic Course Director, Dr. Kathryn Sorrells, and I am asking you to participate in this phenomenological study of that transition.

If you agree to participate, I will be sending you a link on October 1st, to a secure website containing 17 open-ended research questions regarding your experience teaching in, or adapting to, the new model. Your responses will be completely anonymous, and at no time will any system track or identify your user information. The results of the study may be published but your name will not be known.

It should take no longer than 30-minutes to complete the survey and your answers will serve to add to a growing body of knowledge of the impact of hybrid education models on Public Speaking programs.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call email me at polly.robinson@csun.edu or call me at [telephone number redacted].

Please respond to this email with your consent to participate.

Sincerely,

Polly Robinson  
polly.robinson@csun.edu  
[telephone number redacted]

Diane Gehart, Ph.D.  
diane.gehart.74@csun.edu  
[telephone number redacted]

## Appendix D

### Non-Hybrid Teaching Faculty (Department Stakeholders) Survey

1. What were your initial preconceptions/expectations of process of moving the Basic Course to a hybrid model?
2. If you had objections to the transition of Public Speaking to a hybrid model, what were they?
3. If you supported the transition to the new medium, how did you do so?
4. Did you have a prediction of student learning outcomes? If so, what were they?
5. What, if any, input did you have in the transition process?
6. What, if any, input did you have in the selection of textbook for the new model?
7. What, if any, were the impacts of the change to a hybrid model to departmental interactions between faculty?
8. How do you feel the changed format from in-class to hybrid impacted course content and outcomes?
9. Teaching Public Speaking revolves around feedback from students as you introduce and model Public Speaking. How do you, as Communication Studies faculty, view the change to an online model?
10. Do you agree with the statement, “It’s the content, not the delivery”? Why or why not?
11. What, if any, communication from administrators of the University or the hybrid pilot program either helped or hindered your support of the transition to the new model?
12. If you would like to receive a summary of the themes that emerge from analysis of all survey respondents, please enter your email address. Your name and/or contact information shall remain confidential.

## Appendix E

### Questions for Face-to-Face Interview With Director

1. What steps were taken to achieve faculty/departmental buy-in to the proposed change to a hybrid course delivery method for the basic Public Speaking course?
  - a. What steps do you feel worked?
  - b. What steps do you feel did not?
2. What did you perceive was the initial faculty response toward the proposed change?
3. What did you perceive was the faculty (full-time, adjunct, and/or TA) attitude toward technology and its use in teaching the basic Public Speaking course?
4. What (if any) group and interpersonal communication techniques were useful in making the transition to the hybrid course delivery?
5. What impact (if any) do you perceive did delivering Public Speaking in a hybrid format have on student learning outcomes?
6. What impact (if any) do you perceive did delivering Public Speaking in a hybrid format have on faculty (full-time, adjunct, and/or TA) relationships?
7. Do you have any other thoughts or impressions about the transition to a hybrid model for Public Speaking course delivery that you would like to share?